

PLAIN SENSE.



A NOVEL.



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A NOVEL.

—◆—
IN THREE VOLUMES.

“ Reason still use, to reason still attend.”

POPE.

—◆—
VOL. I.

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PLAIN SENSE.

CHAP. I.

“ Piange dé quel, che gia fia fatto Servo
“ Di due vaghi occhi, e d'una bella treccia,
“ Sotto cui si nascende un Cor protervo,
“ Che poco pura abbia, con molto feccia.”

ARIOSTO.

MARIA VILLARS was born a beauty. Her first smile was enchantment, her first movement grace : Nor had fortune been less favorable to her than nature—she and one son were the only offspring born to Lord Villars, by his first wife. On his marriage, 20,000*l.* the fortune that his wife brought

brought him, had been, by marriage settlements, allotted to younger children, and there having been no limitation, as to number, the whole sum became the property of Maria. Lady Villars died in a few months after the birth of her daughter; and many more had not elapsed before Lord Villars exchanged the sober garb of affliction for the gay trappings of a bridegroom.

On this second marriage, Maria was placed under the care of a sister of her father's, a woman, who to an unbounded love for dissipation, joined so much natural good humour, as made her desirous that all with whom she had to do, should share in pleasures, which she thought so necessary to happiness. Although married, she had no children; she had talked herself into the belief, that she was miserable from the want of them; Maria therefore became her passion. The most unlimited indulgence soon taught her to know no rule for action
but

but her own will: Naturally violent, craving, and vain, she soon became tyrannical, selfish, and overbearing. Nature had bestowed upon her a quickness of apprehension, which, had it been properly directed, might have assisted her in procuring such useful knowledge, as would in time have formed her judgment, and corrected her temper; but this quickness being mistaken by her aunt for wit, it became rather a subject of praise for itself, than cultivated as a means by which to acquire things worthy of praise.

Of the many accomplishments, therefore, that Maria made a parade of acquiring, she knew no one tolerably, music and dancing excepted. She was born with an accurate ear and a sweet voice, and she so early felt the advantage to be derived from the cultivation of such enchanting talents, that she had acquired a very competent knowledge in the science of music, and in the little less difficult one of dancing, she ex-

celled. In her earliest years she had been her aunt's plaything; as time began more to unfold her charms, she became her boast and her exhibition.

Where rank, youth, beauty, talents, and fortune, were united, it is not wonderful that the useful acquirements of the understanding were unfought, or that the unobtrusive virtues of the heart were forgotten. In the circle wherein Maria Villars moved, there was but one opinion, "that Miss Villars was perfection." She heard it every hour of the day; she saw it in the deference that was paid to her opinions, and in the eagerness that was manifested even to *prevent* her wishes; she repeated it to herself continually, and there was certainly no article of her faith to which her mind yielded half so perfect an assent.

Amidst the general admiration that followed her wherever she appeared, there was not wanting, even from her earliest youth, several individuals, who, allured by her beauty,

269

beauty, or induced by her fortune, seriously sought her for a wife; but her aunt was in no haste to induce her to fix her choice; she thought no rank, however high, or fortune, however splendid, above what might be challenged by the merits of her niece. And Maria (whose greatest delight was in multiplying her conquests, and in the infliction of pain) encouraged and disdained all her lovers alike.

She was now in her eighteenth year; when one night, on her return from a ball, she declared to her aunt, in the most peremptory terms, that her choice was made; that she was in love with Mr. Mordaunt, and that Mr. Mordaunt she would marry. The shock of an earthquake could not have been more tremendous to the feelings of Mrs. Fortescue, than was this declaration of her niece. She knew Mr. Mordaunt for a young man of fashion and good family, elegant in his person, and insinuating in his manners; but he was with-

out rank, and almost without fortune: as to his understanding, or his moral character, she had never heard either of them mentioned, nor would they have made any part of her inquiries. She attempted to remonstrate; but she soon found that she had neither the power that authority bestows, nor the influence that is derived from affection. Maria had taken her resolution; and she scrupled not to say, "that although she should be best pleased if her marriage were sanctioned by her aunt's approbation, yet the want of such approbation should not prevent it."

The fact was, that Mr. Mordaunt, from the first time in which he beheld Maria, had become violently and truly in love with her. There was something in the humility and verity of his passion, that had been peculiarly pleasing to her vanity; his address and his person had charmed her: she saw his attentions were sought by the most distinguished of her companions; it be-
came,

came, therefore, a point of honour to attach him to herself; but when she learned that he was the object of the tenderest love to her most intimate friend, she was resolved to make him her husband.

Mrs. Fortescue, despairing of the effect of her own influence with her niece, saw no other means to prevent a marriage which she so much disapproved, except by the force of parental authority; she applied to Lord Villars, representing to him the entire destruction of those ambitious hopes, the uncommon beauty and attractions of Maria had given birth to, if she were thus permitted to dispose of herself. But Lord Villars, however he might wish that the inclinations of his daughter had taken another bent, was too much engaged in the cares and interests that had arisen from a second marriage, to bestow much thought or trouble on the affairs of a child, estranged from him from her birth, and whom he considered as being totally spoiled

ed by the weak indulgence of her aunt ; he therefore told his sister, that she must abide by the consequences of her own misconduct ; that ten thousand pounds was the whole of what he could spare to his daughter on her marriage, but that the rest of the settlement would be her's at his death ; and that she must endeavour to make the best bargain she could.

Mrs. Fortescue, thus finding that all opposition would be vain, no longer troubled herself to oppose what she could not prevent. Mr. Mordaunt was made the happiest of men, by being told that Maria Villars was to be his wife ; and Maria herself took the air of sacrificing ambition and avarice at the shrine of love. She became, in truth, during the time of the courtship, as much in love with Mr. Mordaunt, as she could be with any man. As to Mr. Mordaunt, he was not more enchanted with her beauty, or captivated by the graces of her manner, than he was impressed with gratitude,
for

for the preference she gave him; he considered such a preference as a proof of the most disinterested affection; and entertained not a doubt but that in the lovely mistress he was about to possess, he should find the good-humoured companion, the affectionate friend, and the faithful wife: he knew not, nor would it have been in the power of an angel from heaven to have made him believe, that Maria Villars was to be the bane of his happiness, and the scourge of his children. Maria, it is true, had suffered herself, equally with Mr. Mordaunt, to be determined in her choice of a companion for life, by the charms of an exterior, and by motives that could have no influence on the happiness of that life; but she had not, like him, added, even in imagination, the qualities either of the head or heart; she had not thought about them. The man who was in love with her was, of course, at her disposal; she did not so far mistrust her charms, as to suspect that this might not always be the case; and

while she could preserve an unlimited power over the actions of Mr. Mordaunt, she sought for no other quality on which to ground happiness; there was no one excellence of the head or the heart, nor all the possible excellencies of both united, that she would not have exchanged for the single virtue of unlimited compliance with her wishes. But Mr. Mordaunt was formed by nature to have bestowed happiness of a **very** different kind from that which Maria required—with perfectly good and clear sense, of a calm and gentle mind, with kind affections, and the most disinterested dispositions, had he met with a heart and temper congenial to his own, there was no degree of domestic felicity that he was not capable of giving and receiving.

It would have been Mr. Mordaunt's wish upon his marriage, to have withdrawn from scenes of dissipation and expence, (at once so adverse to his inclination, and so inimical to his fortune) to his personal estate in Northum-

Northumberland; but to this plan Mrs. Fortescue and Maria were equally averse; and Mr. Mordaunt easily found, in the gaiety of youth, and the inveteracy of habit, a sufficient excuse for this opposition to his wishes: he hoped time, and the cares of a mother, which he saw with pleasure, would soon belong to Maria, would produce dispositions more suited to his own; and in the meanwhile he made his happiness by contributing to her's. He was, however, somewhat more alarmed, when he found, that even after the birth of a daughter, her rage for amusement seemed greater than ever: and long before his tenderness thought she ought to have quitted her house, he found her eager again to emerge into the world, to form new engagements, and to seek new pleasures: she had absolutely refused to suckle her child, and he had been made to believe that her health was too delicate to admit of her performing such an office; but when he saw it sufficiently robust to encounter the

vigils of balls and assemblies, and the harassing exertions of morning amusements, he first uttered his surprise, and then ventured to remonstrate.

It was the first moment in which he had appeared to have a will distinct from that of Maria. The vehemence which she betrayed upon this occasion astonished and alarmed him; but the veil was now fallen, and from this hour she appeared in her natural form. The imperfections of temper in a wife, although sufficient to destroy happiness, are, however, seldom powerful enough to pluck from the breast of a tender-hearted man a deep rooted love. Mr. Mordaunt was compelled to be miserable, but he could not cease to love. It was not so with Maria—she had never loved—she never could love any one but herself. While Mr. Mordaunt contributed to her convenience, or her pleasure, she smiled upon him with a complacency that made him believe himself the happiest of men; when

when he thwarted her most extravagant wishes, she armed her brow with defiance, and his hours were passed in wrangling and ill-humour.

For some of the first years of their marriage, the dread of interrupting those moments of sunshine, from which he drew his precarious and little enjoyed happiness, made him give up, undisputed, almost every point to his wife. Her habit of controul became by this means the more confirmed; and afterwards, when this reason ceased (for there were no longer moments of sunshine) the embarrassment of his affairs, and the dread that all minds, not strong, feel of probing the bottom of an evil, occasioned him to go on in the same way. Thus, at the end of ten years, he found himself disappointed in his hopes of happiness, involved in debt, the father of three miserable, neglected girls, and the husband of a decayed beauty, whose health had been ruined by dissipation, and whose

5 temper,

temper, not naturally good, had been irritated by the distresses of poverty : her heart and her understanding offered no resources in the hour of disappointment ; and her continual self-reproaches for having so foolishly thrown herself away, awakened Mr. Mordaunt to a wondering sense, how the most beautiful features, or the most perfect form, could ever have been a veil sufficiently thick to have concealed from his observation the deformity of her temper, and the selfishness of her heart.

As to what was now to be done, there remained no option. Mrs. Fortescue had so often relieved the distresses of her niece, that she had no longer the power of doing so—the ten thousand pounds paid at her marriage were dissipated—of the ten that were to be received on the death of Lord Villars, the interest only could be of any use, as the principal was settled upon children. Creditors were numerous and pressing ; there was no alternative but a gaol,
or

or the family mansion in Northumberland.

Mr. Mordaunt, with a degree of resolution which might have been the preventative, ten years before, of the evils, for which it was now scarcely an alleviation, sold all his property, in or near town, and packing up his wife, himself, their three daughters, and one woman servant, in the only carriage they had left, this ruined family began their journey into Northumberland.

Maria, although she had nothing to oppose to a measure so necessary and unavoidable, yet had not fortitude enough to submit to it without the bitterest lamentations, and the deepest grief. She parted from Mrs. Fortescue as if she had been going into a Siberian exile; and Mrs. Fortescue herself would, with less grief, have followed her to her grave, than thus have seen her, at eight and twenty, banished from all
that

that she held valuable in life, and buried in the frightful glooms of a northern solitude ; but grief, however violent, and tempestuous, brings no balm to irremediable evils. After some days of vehemence, complaints, and tears—after others of a fullen silence and ill-humoured discontent, Mrs. Mordaunt found herself, in spite of all her grief and reluctance, settled at Groby Manor, compelled to attend to the common affairs of life, and her influence confined to the circle of a small country family, three hundred miles distant from London.

CHAP. II.

“ Yonder mansion,——
——“ To the morning sun
“ Turns his warm aspect——
——“ On a hill,
“ Half way between the summit and a brook,
“ That idly wanders at the foot, it stands,
“ And looks into a valley, wood-bespread,
“ That winds along below.”

HURDIS.

GROBY MANOR was situate about thirty miles from the sea coast, at the head of a narrow valley, the opposite sides of which were formed by a variety of high and differently shaped hills, well wooded, with here and there a green meadow or a corn field interspersed. Through the valley ran a clear stream, and there were a variety

variety of pleasant and romantic walks on every side.

The house had, for many generations, been the residence of a respectable and well-beloved family : it contained large and convenient rooms, and though the furniture was old, it was sufficiently plentiful. The house was sheltered from every cutting wind, and open only to a southern exposure ; it was warm and comfortable ; provisions and coals were cheap and abundant ; there was a good library, and the air, clear and wholesome, gave colour to the cheek, and vigour to the limbs.

Here, then, were sources enough of enjoyment, were the mind capable of relishing them ; but Mrs. Mordaunt seemed resolved, that, as she was to be less happy than she wished to be, she would be as miserable as she could. She passed her days in sullen discontent, and unavailing repining, refusing all society, and rendering

ing those who were obliged to approach her, as miserable as herself.

With Mr. Mordaunt it was otherwise : Having once broken the chains that tied him to a life he disapproved, his natural temper began to manifest itself in beneficial effects to himself and all around him. He was delighted to be returned to the seat of his forefathers ; joy sprung in his heart at the sight of the scenes of his infancy ; he rejoiced to renew the social connexions of his former neighbourhood, and to busy himself in the cares and occupations of a country life. He saw, with a satisfaction that tranquillized his sleeping, and gladdened his waking hours, that ten years of prudent retirement would clear his estate. In these ten years he hoped to recompense to his daughters the evil they had hitherto received from neglect and ill education ; and he considered the end as being scarcely more desirable than the means.

He

He endeavoured, by gentleness and the kindest affection, to soften the mind of Maria, and to open it to a capability of enjoyment : he still loved her ; he therefore easily persuaded himself, that time and the easy undisturbed life she was henceforth to lead, might work this miracle ; he was willing to lay all her faults on the mistakes of her education, and the folly of her former life.

Here, my dear Maria, (would he sometimes say) here it depends only upon ourselves to be happy ; and, after the experience we have had of the insufficiency of every other source for happiness, shall we neglect the only pure one, and which is now in our power ? He had not, indeed, the satisfaction to see that she was sensible either to his kindness, or his reasoning ; but he considered, that time only could overcome habit so deeply rooted as her's, and he was willing to wait patiently and good humouredly for its effects.

Twelve

Twelve months were now elapsed since Mr. Mordaunt's removal into the country, and Maria began to be somewhat more reconciled to her situation. She was not the less reconciled from observing the effect that the change in her manner of living had upon her beauty: the regularity of her life, and the purity of the air, had flushed her faded cheek with health, and had restored the lustre to her eye; her limbs had recovered their roundness, and her complexion its transparency; she heard the rustic praises of the peasants whenever she walked out; and her own maid had not so far forgotten her old trade, as not carefully to repeat, sometimes with, and sometimes without exaggeration, the commendations that were retailed by servants from the dining parlours of their masters.

She was conscious of the disgust she had given to all their neighbours on her first coming into the country; she had then scarce thought it worth her while to remember the
existence

existence of beings whom she considered as little above the brute creation ; but to the pleasure of admiration it was not possible, while she continued to breathe, that she should long be insensible. She endeavoured to apologize for her former conduct, by imputing it to ill health ; and she gave an appearance of truth to her apology, by now shewing a willingness to enter into society, and to partake of such pleasures as the country afforded.

Her insinuating manners, the superiority of her breeding, and her uncommon beauty, adorned as it now was by graciousness, soon made her the idol, or the envy, of all who approached her. Mr. Mordaunt could not but be pleased with this improvement in his wife's temper ; but he soon found it was confined wholly to those hours when she was engaged with company, either from home, or in her own house : he saw, with the most sensible mortification, that this amendment, therefore, arose only from the
the

the gratification of her vanity ; to him she was always alike cold and insensible, always equally neglectful of her children, and intolerable to her domestics : her grumblings and discontent, when they were alone, were rather increased than abated ; she fullenly refused to take pleasure in any of his plans or amusements, coldly withdrew her attention when he wished to converse, complained that his eagerness in his country pursuits distracted her nerves, and would shut herself up in her room for a day together, altering an old bonnet, or new modelling some of the ancient furniture.

Such a conduct, in spite of himself, gave Mr. Mordaunt a bad opinion of her heart, and gradually wore away all attachment or partiality, but that which a confirmed habit, and the intimacy of their connexion preserved, in spite of his reason and his feelings.

CHAP. III.

“ She bore a mind that Envy could not but call fair.”

SHAKESPEAR.

HAD Maria been more amiable, they might now have been happy. They were now settled with a small but comfortable establishment, upon an equal footing with their neighbours, sufficiently busied to feel no want of employment, and sufficiently idle to be in no danger of fatigue ; they had no particular cares to molest them ; they enjoyed health and a competency ; and if they had nothing much to hope, they had also nothing much to fear.

But,

But, in a life where happiness must arise alone from a discharge of duty, Maria found no charms; she was sensible only to weariness. As some relief from this eternal sameness, she was not displeased to find herself with child. To give herself more consequence, and the circumstance more interest, she took it into her head to imagine that she longed passionately for a boy. By talking perpetually on the subject, and expatiating on the maternal raptures she was about to feel, and the maternal cares in which she was henceforth to be engaged, she had converted what was at first merely a whim, into a serious passion; she counted the months, the weeks, as they passed; every day might now complete her wishes; the hour came, and—she was delivered of a daughter!

From the moment she beheld her, the poor child's destiny, as far as it depended upon the affection of its mother, was decided. 'It was hideous; she saw every

bad passion in its countenance; it looked like an owl, like an ape, like aunt Nelly.' —Invective could go no farther.

This aunt Nelly, the *ne plus ultra* of abhorrence, had been the sister of Mr. Mordaunt: Her breast was the mansion of every female virtue; she had been the being in the world, next to Maria, that Mr. Mordaunt had most fondly loved; being by many years his senior, she had been the nurse of his childhood, the gentle monitor of his youthful days, the warm and steady friend of his manly years. On his marriage he had eagerly sent for her to town, that she might know and be known to one whom he thought her only superior. He told his Maria, 'that in the friendship of his sister she would find all the advantage of superior wisdom and perfect goodness; he did not bid her love her; he knew it was impossible she should do otherwise; and as to his sister, she would doat upon Maria as her child.'

All

All this might have been, and would have been, had Maria been the person Mr. Mordaunt believed her to be ; but, with her sarcastic spirit, and self consequence, virtue and wisdom, in the form of a plain, though intelligent looking woman of five and forty, were likely only to produce contempt and satire—She quarrelled with every feature in her face in the first half hour of their acquaintance, ridiculed her to her companions, scoffed at her to her woman, and in the constrained civility that she thought proper to shew her before Mr. Mordaunt, evinced to a woman of Miss Mordaunt's penetration, the aversion she had taken to her. Nor was it less difficult to discover the mistake that Mr. Mordaunt had made in his choice ; and Maria's aversion to her sister-in-law was increased by a consciousness that it could not be hid from her.

This aversion, however, might have worn off, could Mrs. Mordaunt have

found real cause for the contempt she expressed towards Miss Mordaunt; but she soon was compelled to feel for this hated sister, a respect, which her virtue inspired, and a dread which her understanding imposed. This respect, this dread, converted dislike into hatred: She was sensible her conduct would justify animadversion; and she had no doubt but she received it from Miss Mordaunt—she looked upon her as a spy, and hated her accordingly.

During Mr. Mordaunt's residence in London, Miss Mordaunt had visited town from time to time, for the purpose of seeing her brother; she had very early discovered that he was unhappy; and, although he did not complain, she perceived that her company was a relief to him; she therefore never suffered twelve months to pass without her spending a few weeks in lodgings in town, contributing by this means all in her power toward his happiness, and indulging herself in the pleasure she received from

from the company of his children; she endeavoured all she could to counteract the evil they imbibed at home, and she fought by every method to inspire them with love towards herself;—in this latter particular she so completely succeeded, that the poor girls loved nothing half so well as aunt Nelly.

All these circumstances confirmed Maria's hatred, and almost the only act of maternity she ever exercised was the giving her eldest girl a whipping, on her saying, as her mother was putting on her morning bonnet, 'Now mamma looks like aunt Nelly.'

Two years before Mr. Mordaunt's removal into the country, Miss Mordaunt had been seized with a disorder which prevented her stirring from home; and having languished under very painful circumstances for eighteen months, she had at length been released from, and rewarded for her sufferings.

sufferings. Her death had been a severe affliction to Mr. Mordaunt, and he cherished her memory with the highest degree of tenderness and veneration. It was not therefore with Mr. Mordaunt that the supposed likeness of his new-born child to aunt Nelly, was likely to operate to her disadvantage; nor was the unreasonable aversion that Mrs. Mordaunt had taken to the poor infant, one whit more prejudicial to her with her father; for when he beheld the inveteracy with which his wife persisted in her detestation to so excellent a creature as his sister had been, and when he compared the parade she now made of her feelings, as a mother, with the absolute neglect she had hitherto shewn to her offspring, all partiality was for the moment at an end; and he viewed her with a degree of disapprobation, that seemed to prohibit the possibility of its ever again being renewed.

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There was one point, however, even on this subject, in which Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt agreed; this was, in giving the name of Ellen to the poor little girl; Maria chose it that she might gratify her spite in calling the child aunt Nelly, and Mr. Mordaunt was fond of perpetuating a name that had belonged to a sister, whose memory (perhaps by comparing her character with that of his wife) grew every day dearer to him.

CHAP. IV.

——“ Colei,

“ Non fo, se dovra dir matrigna, O madre ;

“ Ma se pur madre, a lei poco piu pia,

“ Che Medea ai figlia, e Progne stata Sia.”

ARIOSTO.

IT was not merely in the airy nothing of a name that Mrs. Mordaunt exercised her dislike to her unhappy infant: the extinguishable desire that she had of being ever the object of attention and observation, made her seek for means to perpetuate her consequence, when youth and
beauty

beauty (however distant she might at present consider that period) should be no more.

To be the principal object wherever she appeared, had been the first wish to which she had been conscious, and it was likely to be the last of which she would be sensible. The fashionable furor for education presented her the means she sought—she could no longer eclipse rival beauties at a ball; she could no longer strike the fangs of envy into a heart similar to her own, by the superior elegance of her head-dress, or the splendor of her equipage; all her triumphs were confined within the circle of a small neighbourhood, far remote from the scene of all her former distinctions, and where the inquiries of the curious were more directed to the domestic œconomy of their neighbours, than to the form of their clothes, or the fashion of their carriages. To this neighbourhood she resolved to be known as the most

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educating

educating mother in it. Her elder daughters were too old, and too much under the wiser care of their father, to be proper objects on which to display her abilities in this new road to distinction; but the newborn infant was her undisputed property, and she resolved to pour all the terrors of education on poor Ellen's head.

In this design, so wisely and so benevolently formed, she succeeded so perfectly, that at the early age of twelve months, when other children know their mothers only as their surest source of indulgence, Maria was become so completely an object of terror to her child, that she scarce looked upon her without trembling, or appeared before her without tears: It seemed too, as if every circumstance was to conspire to render the infancy of Ellen wretched. In less than fifteen months after her birth, the eagerly-desired boy was born; and, as if this unnatural mother possessed but a certain degree of affection, the little tenderness
that

that she had hitherto manifested towards Ellen, was all withdrawn, to be added to that which she profusely lavished on the boy; besides which, Ellen was always wrong in every thing she did, or every thing she did not do for her brother. If she caressed him, she would smother the child—If she stood aloof, she was a little insensible, without affections; and then she had a slap, or a push, or her play-things were taken from her, or she was sometimes whipped, she did not know for why, or for what.

The age of teaching now came on, and Mrs. Mordaunt was resolved to teach; but the truth was, that she had never learned; her own ideas of what she meant to convey were too indistinct, to enable her to communicate them to another; her method was unintelligible, and her impatience extreme. Ellen could learn nothing—it was stupidity—it was obstinacy—she had always foretold that she had the worst

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dispositions

dispositions of human nature—punishment followed punishment; till by a succession of such teaching and such correction, that very stupidity and obstinacy were nearly produced which they were designed to correct.

Mr. Mordaunt was not an inattentive spectator of all this; but he was far from understanding the real truth of the case. The early terror that had been impressed on the mind of Ellen, had made her appear, even to Mr. Mordaunt, as a child of a slow capacity, and somewhat of a sullen disposition; he was often witness to what were represented to him as fits of obstinacy, and sometimes to moments of violence; he feared Ellen might resemble her mother, and thought a little correction might be necessary: with the degree and frequency of the punishment he was wholly unacquainted; and as it is easy to put a child in the wrong, Mrs. Mordaunt took care that Ellen should always appear so to her

her father; but however Mr. Mordaunt might, for a certain time, have been persuaded, that his wife's mode of treating his daughter was salutary, or necessary, experience convinced him that it was inefficacious. At six years old Ellen could scarcely read; and he observed, with inexpressible pain, a sullen indifference to all instruction or reproof pervading her mind.

Maria had never been her husband's friend; for many years she had ceased to be his confidant, and the ingenuous mind of Mr. Mordaunt had suffered the severest mortification, when he had found it necessary to sacrifice the pleasure of communication to the dictates of prudence. Since his residence in Northumberland he had found, however, both a friend and a confidant, to whom he opened his heart whenever he was oppressed with dissatisfaction, or perplexed with doubt. This friend and this confidant was the clergyman of the parish, whose benevolence had never fail-

ed to sooth his sorrows, or his judgment to enlighten his understanding.

To Mr. Thornton he revealed the fears and grief that the character of Ellen excited in his breast.

“ Give me leave to invite my wife to make one of our party,” said Mr. Thornton : “ I am mistaken if she will not give you comfort.”

Mrs. Thornton was only in the next room ; she obeyed her husband's summons ; she sat down, and heard Mr. Mordaunt's distress.

“ Your child, my dear Sir,” said she, “ is neither stupid nor ill disposed ; wrong methods have been taken with her—terror has overwhelmed the powers of her mind, and deadened her affection. Convince her that she is beloved, and she will be and do every thing you can desire.”

“ How

“How is it possible, madam,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “that you should have formed so contrary, and so much more favourable an opinion of Ellen, than I, with all my partiality, have been able to entertain?”

She loves me, Sir,” returned Mrs. Thornton; “and she loves me, because she believes I love her: If she can love one person, she can love another. She is willing to learn of me; and only the last time I was with her, I taught her a lesson in ten minutes, that she told me she had been the three preceding days in vain attempting to learn.—Do you ask other proofs?”

“No,” cried Mr. Mordaunt, “but I have farther favors to ask of you. You must take this poor child under your care, my dear Mrs. Thornton; you must take her, and make her all you say she is capable of being made.”

After

After a little more conversation, all the particulars of this plan were settled.

Mrs. Thornton had long seen Ellen's sufferings with pity, and was happy to contribute all in her power to put an end to them. Mrs. Mordaunt, convinced that Ellen would do no credit to her mode of education, and tired of the trouble she gave her, easily consented to part with her.

The parsonage, to which Ellen was now removed, was scarcely half a mile distant from Groby Manor, and it was situate at the other end of the valley. So near a neighbourhood enabled Mr. Mordaunt to see his daughter every day, and he saw her every day with increased satisfaction: Her palid cheeks, hitherto robbed of their colour by the continual washing of tears, began to be tinged with a faint red; her sunken eye, formerly fixed gloomily on the ground, was often now raised timidly to the person who spoke to her, and sometimes
cast

cast forth beams of intelligence and gaiety ; if she did not yet run to meet her father when he approached her, she ventured to press the hand that held her's, and sometimes she would rest her head upon his shoulder, and he could perceive, as she raised it, a tear trembling in her eye, which he could attribute only to the tenderness of her heart, responsive to his caresses. Mr. Mordaunt left no method untried to secure her affections, and every day now gave him a more perfect assurance that he was not unsuccessful.

Ellen had been about six months in her new situation, when the illness of Lord Villars called Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt into Hampshire ; his indisposition was long, and terminated in his death.

Mrs. Mordaunt, very well pleased to find herself once again in her old world, caught at every possible reason for prolonging her stay : Her brother, now Lord Villars,

lars, had been married some years ; she had seen little of him during this period : he pressed her so much to continue in Hampshire the remainder of the summer, that Mr. Mordaunt consented that she should do so ; but he consented upon condition that their three elder daughters should join them there ; he thought it desirable to have them known to their nearest connexions, and he was willing to give them such assistances, in some exterior accomplishments, as the distant situation of Northumberland had not hitherto allowed them. The boy had never been separated from his mother.

Mr. Mordaunt's condition was joyfully accepted : the summer passed pleasantly with them all ; and when the time for repairing to London approached, Mrs. Fortescue (now a widow) so vehemently urged the melancholy of returning into Northumberland at that season, and so kindly offered the whole family apartments in her house, that

that Mr. Mordaunt again consented to prolong his absence from home.

The family had not been settled more than a month in town, when Mrs. Fortescue was seized with a fever, of which she died in about a fortnight: On her death it was found she had bequeathed to Mrs. Mordaunt all she had in her power to dispose of. This all consisted in a small country mansion, with an estate of about 200l. a year about it; it was situated within ten miles of Lord Villars's house, in the country, and was furnished and fitted up with all the elegance of modern taste.

Whatever tears Mrs. Mordaunt might shed for the loss of a partial, though mistaken, friend; for one, who had not only been her steady advocate through life, but had proved her benefactress at her death, were soon dried up by the thoughts of the independence that friend had secured to her, and still more by reflections on the place

place where the property which gave her that independence was situated. She immediately declared her intentions of going to Hadley Lodge directly upon leaving town; but she also protested, that she meant not to leave London till the middle of June. The house she was at present in was to continue her's for six months, and she therefore saw no reason why the event of Mrs. Fortescue's death should abridge the scheme of pleasure that she had laid down for the ensuing spring.

Mr. Mordaunt felt it harsh to oppose any of these resolutions, since they were not (in consequence of their new acquisitions) liable to the censure of imprudence in a pecuniary light: He therefore acquiesced, reserving, however, to himself the power of visiting Ellen and Northumberland; and this he proposed to do when Mrs. Mordaunt and her family removed to Hadley Lodge.

In

In the execution of this plan he was, however, prevented. The death of a distant relation, who had for many years resided in the West Indies, made it necessary he should himself cross the Atlantic: property of some value had devolved to him, but the succession of it was disputed, and it was attended with some circumstances that made it necessary, if he meant to prosecute his claim to it, to visit the island where it lay.

He would willingly have persuaded Mrs. Mordaunt to have returned into Northumberland, there to have remained during his absence; but to persuade her was impossible, and to compel her to a measure so disagreeable to herself, on the eve of a separation that might be for a considerable length of time, was what the softness of Mr. Mordaunt's feelings would not permit; it was therefore agreed that she should reside at her own house while he was absent, and he flattered himself that the neighbourhood

neighbourhood of her brother might be some restraint upon her indiscretion, and afford protection and counsel to his girls, if any circumstance should arise, during his absence, in which they wanted either.

The time was short in which he was to arrange all this ; he recommended his family to Lord Villars, and sailed for Jamaica.

By unforeseen circumstances and unavoidable delays, his absence was prolonged to the beginning of the fifth year, and he returned something poorer than he set out.

Immediately on his arrival in England Mr. Mordaunt hastened to Hadley Lodge ; but no comfort awaited him there—He found his eldest daughter married to a man of libertine character and dissipated fortune, whose recommendation, in the eyes of Mrs. Mordaunt, had been his fashionable manners,

manners, and his connexions with people of rank.

The boy, now ten years old, had continued, in spite of Mr. Mordaunt's repeated injunctions to the contrary, in his mother's house, where he had remained ignorant of every thing he ought to have learned, and become acquainted with almost every thing he ought not to have known.

Mrs. Mordaunt herself was embarrassed with debts, and of the independence, of which she had made so ill an use, but little remained.

Mr. Mordaunt could scarcely forbear reproaching Lord Villars for the little attention he appeared to have given to his sister and her children; but when he considered that he had himself the cares of a large family upon him, and a numerous train of half brothers and sisters, whose interest he was compelled to attend to, and reflected upon his character, in which selfishness was the

the predominant feature, he thought it best to forbear reproaches, which would now be made in vain, and which might tend to interrupt the friendly intercourse there had hitherto subsisted between himself and Lord Villars. In reproaches to himself, however, he was not sparing; he felt too bitterly the consequences of his ill choice in a wife, not to call himself severely to an account for having suffered his eyes to mislead his judgment.

Northumberland was again the resource; and as Mrs. Mordaunt had now no power to remain in Hampshire without the permission of her husband, she knew it was in vain to oppose her wishes to his; she therefore prepared, however reluctantly, for the departure; but the delays which she artfully threw in the way, having exhausted Mr. Mordaunt's patience, he left her to follow him at her leisure, and set out for Northumberland, accompanied only by the second son of Lord Villars, a youth of fifteen.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

- “ May this great truth by all be understood,
“ That all the pious duties which we owe,
“ The seeds of every virtue here below,
“ From discipline alone and early culture grow.”

WEST.

AS Mr. Mordaunt approached Groby-Manor, his impatience to behold the effects that more than five years must have wrought in Ellen, became extreme.

He was sometimes willing to hope that, having been removed from Mrs. Mordaunt's

VOL. I.

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daunt's baneful influence, she might compensate to him for all the other domestic disappointments that influence had produced; at others, the remembrance of those faults, which he had been accustomed to call natural to her disposition, recurred to his mind, and overclouded it with the dispriting fear that no difference of treatment could have been powerful enough to correct them; yet Mrs. Thornton, though she had said nothing of her mental abilities, had spoken much of her docility. If I find her, said Mr. Mordaunt to himself, gentle and affectionate, I will compound for a moderate capacity, and give up willingly all pretensions to talents or accomplishments.

These thoughts occupied him so much, that not all the comicality and sprightly understanding of his companion could always awake him from his reverie; and Henry, who had as much feeling as gaiety, imposed silence upon himself, that he might not prove troublesome to his uncle.

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt rested not a moment at Groby Manor; but with a long step, and hasty movement, that made Henry laugh, proceeded down the valley to the parsonage.

As he approached the house he heard the sound of a fiddle, and immediately after saw assembled on the green, before the door, ten or twelve girls of different ages, who were dancing gaily to the music. Mr. Mordaunt stopped short—he sought, if possible, to discover Ellen before she was pointed out to him; and Henry rushed forward that he might join in the amusement.

“ Might that be her,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “ might that sprightly, good-humoured looking blooming girl be her, my wishes would be more than answered.”

His wishes were more than answered—It was Ellen herself. The music ceased, the whole group was in confusion, and the next

moment Ellen, with an emotion that charmed him, was in the arms of her father.

“ My dear child, my beloved Ellen, can I ever part with you again ? ”

“ Yes, yes, this very moment, my dear uncle,” cried Henry. “ What! am I not to have a dozen kisses at least of my cousin ? ”

“ And are you my cousin *too* ? ” said Ellen, with one arm round her father’s neck, and the other hand held out to Henry; “ O, I did not know I was ever to have been so happy ! ”

The pathos of the scene was now over, but the delight remained; and Henry having taken something more than his dozen kisses, ran away with Ellen to join her companions, and recommence the dance.

“ You never told me,” said Mr. Mor-daunt to Mr. Thornton, “ of the good-
humour

humour and intelligence that beams in Ellen's countenance, nor of the lightness of her movements, the delicacy of her limbs, and the ease of her shape."

"Ellen is not a beauty," said Mrs. Thornton, smiling.

"She is in her father's eyes," returned Mr. Mordaunt, "and will be so in those of her lover."

"But you do not ask what I have attempted to teach her; you do not inquire whether she was capable of learning."

"I am almost indifferent what she has learned; with the dispositions that I see she possesses, she will gratify my fondest wishes."

"But Ellen has not only dispositions," said Mr. Thornton, "she has powers—she is an excellent arithmetician, she is a good geographer, she is mistress of all the rules of
D 3 drawing,

drawing, she writes and speaks French well, and has a very competent knowledge of Latin."

"To which let me add," said Mrs. Thornton, "that she is mistress of her needle, understands music tolerably, plays at chess, and dances, walks, and plays at shuttlecock to admiration.

"Impossible," said Mr. Mordaunt; "you flatter me."

"Nothing can be more true, and yet Ellen is no prodigy; she is what every girl of common sense and common application may be at her age."

"But how did you conquer her obstinacy? How did you subdue her violence?"

"I neither found her obstinate or violent. I did not propose to her to do any thing but what she saw my own daughter, something younger

younger than herself do. Each day has its allotted business, and its allotted pleasure. The slowest capacity could comprehend, that the more hours were consumed in business, the fewer there would be for pleasure. It is only necessary to lay down the premises, *and to abide by them*; the conclusion every child can draw for itself. If that conclusion is as infallible as it is unpleasant, in a little time it will be carefully avoided. To the reason of its instructors a child will not perhaps readily submit; it is against reason that it should; but to the reason of facts children will always yield, provided it is made clear to them."

"Can it really be so easy to give the best possible education to a child?"

"I do not say that mine is the best possible education, nor is it so easy as it appears; to guard against the faults of the child is not half the business; the weakness of the tutor is much more inimical to the

success of his efforts—to be unyielding in matters (simply considered) of little import; to bear a cold countenance with a warm heart; to be insensible to the blandishments of childhood, where the good of the future man requires it, are not easy tasks to a feeling and affectionate mind, and no other is fitted for the task of education. Then, will not the tutor have to combat with his own indolence, his own unevenness of disposition, his caprice, and his partialities? No, the task of education is not easy; but it is the greatest in which man or woman can be engaged, and ought therefore to be attended to by all who undertake it, with every energy of the mind. What I have chiefly wished to avoid was the doing too much, not to do mischief, and to let the causes that produce good have their full operation, are two material points. I was aware that the greatest difficulty in this important matter arose from the weaknesses of the instructors, and the indiscreet interference of others. Mr. Thornton and I
are

are absolute here, and are perfectly steady, though sometimes at the expence of a heart ach. Hence Ellen and Mary have learned to consider our laws as immutable as the decrees of fate, and to accommodate themselves to them, as they would do to any physical necessity. Constant application has made the task of learning easy, and where something new, however little, is acquired every day, the sum total at the end of five years will be surprising."

"But do you allow nothing to natural disposition, and to the natural powers of the mind?"

"Oh, yes, a great deal: and here I acknowledge that Ellen has met my cares more than half way; she has a very good but not an uncommon capacity; her quickness of apprehension, however, is something more than common; she has a warm heart and a generous mind—I have been able to move her with the touch of a finger, had

she had duller feelings, I must have put my whole strength to her."

"Your method of teaching seems not only calculated to produce the immediate end, that of communicating the thing to be taught, but also to give an anticipated experience of life. Will there not be learned by it, that yielding to the necessity of things, which is the best secret for happiness, and which enables us to repress useless repinings, and when we cannot be happy one way, to be happy another?"

"It is what I hope from it, and without some such end all the teachings in the world are only calculated to destroy the pleasures of childhood, without having any tendency to promote the virtue or the happiness of the man. I know not what may be Ellen's destiny; but I think I can dare to foretel, that if her present habits are allowed to strengthen, and her present principles to take root, she will never, in any circumstance,

stance, be the victim of ungoverned fancy, or the martyr to a selfish sensibility."

"But is there not some danger in thus guarding her from a too great influence of the feelings, that she should become less amiable by the want of them?"

"I do not guard her from feeling, I guard her from selfishness; for others she will feel acutely, for herself moderately; and where self is out of the question, there is no fear but that reason will always be near enough to ward off any danger, from too lively a sensibility."

"What is the leading feature of her mind? What is it that she is extremely—?"

"Ellen knows no extremes."

"Except," interrupted Mr. Thornton, "the extreme of good-humour."

“ Were I to have made the exception,” said Mrs. Thornton, “ it would have been that of disinterestedness : But let us recollect that we are speaking of a girl of twelve years old ; she is yet really nothing ; all the intimations that she gives of character are favorable ; but, alas ! how six years of weak indulgence, or cold neglect, may make the woman of eighteen differ from the girl of twelve.”

“ She has neither the one or the other to fear,” said Mr. Mordaunt warmly, “ if you will continue your cares.”

“ If I will !——”

“ My obligations,” interrupted Mr. Mordaunt, “ will then be such as can never be discharged. And——”

“ Talk not of obligations,” said Mr. Thornton, “ be assured they are reciprocal, and if you trust your Ellen with us another
fix

six years, they will all be on our side; hitherto she has only acquired the means of self improvement; from this time every day will add something to her real improvement of the mind, and the formation of the heart: And do you not think that those who are to accompany the traveller in so flowery a way, will be more than repaid for the fatigue of the journey?"

The conversation was here interrupted by the breaking up of the ball; and Ellen sideling towards her father, found herself a feat upon half of his chair.

It is not to be doubted that from this evening Mr. Mordaunt spent many of his hours at the parsonage—Henry spent still more—With Ellen he studied, and with Ellen he idled; she was the better scholar of the two, and would laugh at the careless manner in which he had been taught, would scoff at his want of application, and pique him to greater exertion by her ridicule.

cule. When books gave way to sports, they walked, danced, or played at shuttlecock together ; or Henry would assist Ellen and Mary in the labours of their garden ; or they would compel him to listen to some of their botanical discussions—Botany being a new study which Mr. Thornton had just given them. But as to chess, which equally excluded conversation and locomotion, Henry had never patience to hear it mentioned ; for music he had little more toleration, except Ellen would sing a ballad, or play a country dance.

Six weeks were thus passed away, and Mrs. Mordaunt had not yet fulfilled her promise of following her husband ; he therefore thought it most prudent to return into Hampshire, and not to quit it till he brought her away with him. Henry's vacation was more than expired ; he must depart with his uncle ; and Ellen declared, with as much naïveté as truth, that she knew not which she was most sorry to part with—

with—She bade them farewell with a degree of pain she never before remembered to have felt. But she had no leisure for artificial grief; it was rather the recollections that were forced upon her, than any she indulged in, that saddened for some days after their departure both her lessons and her amusements; but a much more serious grief awaited her.

CHAP. VI.

“ Oh, mother! — yet no mother! — ”

SAVAGE.

ELLEN retained only an indistinct idea of the severity and ill-will of her mother towards her during her infancy ; all remembrance of it had been, by the cares of Mrs. Thornton, as much obliterated as possible : thus, though she did not look forward to the arrival of Mrs. Mordaunt with the same delight and desire that she had felt when she expected her father, she nevertheless thought of it with pleasure ; and the expectation of seeing her sisters filled her with hopes still more satisfactory to her feelings.

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The first evening spent in their company repressed this pleasure, and chilled her hopes.

The immediate impulse on the sight of her mother had been to fly into her arms ; but she had stopped short, checked by the frigidity of her air, and the scowling discontent of her brow ; she waited for invitation, but she received it not, and she stood silent and depressed, with her eyes cast upon the ground, unconscious what could have been her fault, yet feeling that she must have committed one.

“ Maria,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “ Ellen longs to embrace you.”

“ There, child,” said Maria, coldly kissing her forehead, “ I hope you are grown good ; but you used to be the naughtiest little brat I was ever acquainted with ; many are the twigs of birch I have worn out in your service.”

Tears

Tears started into poor Ellen's eyes ; she had nothing to say, nor did she know clearly at that moment what she thought ; but she felt that she wished herself away.

Her sisters had no ill-will towards her ; but she was not an object of any interest in their eyes ; vitiated by their mother's precepts and example, they considered the having quitted the South of England, as having quitted every thing that was desirable in life, as the forfeiture of all their hopes of establishment in the world, and, indeed, as the consummation of misfortune ; their journey, therefore, had been spent in tears and regret. Groby Manor appeared to them as a prison, in which, for the future, their only happiness must arise from enumerating delights that were gone for ever, and in talking of persons who were to be seen no more. To all of which Ellen could speak they were perfectly indifferent ; they were too indolent to enter into her exercises, and too ignorant to care about her studies.

Ellen

Ellen sensibly felt her disappointment, a disappointment that every future day confirmed.

Her mother added ill-humour and disapprobation to her coldness, and though it was no longer in her power to punish, or to controul her, it was more than sufficiently so to mortify and to thwart her. There was no opportunity that occurred of doing either that she ever suffered to escape; her dislike to Ellen was, indeed, little, if it all, short of hatred: she could not conceal from herself how false had been the character which in her early years she had sought to stamp her with; her understanding and temper, however, now appeared both to be indubitably excellent; and Mrs. Mordaunt was fully aware of the conclusion that must be drawn by every body, that if such soil had not from the first produced fruit, it must have been wholly owing to the unskilfulness of the cultivator; she therefore considered Ellen's merits and acquirements

quirements as reproaches to herself, and as a most severe mortification to her vanity ; and as she could not, with all her depreciation of them, lessen their real value, she hated Ellen as the cause of her daily and hourly mortification.

It was more by the self-indulgence of railing at Ellen, than from any fixed design, that Mrs. Mordaunt communicated her prejudices to the hearts of her daughters ; these prejudices were aided by the discovery that they soon made, that Ellen, though so far short of them in years, was their superior in every kind of useful knowledge ; they found she every day grew into more consideration, and the just preference that Mr. Mordaunt gave her in his affections, though they did not by any effort towards imitating her excellencies endeavour to lessen, filled them with the most rancorous jealousy : they shrunk from all Ellen's playful and affectionate attempts towards being upon a familiar footing with them, and she

she was soon painfully convinced that she was to look for no friendship from her sisters.

All Mr. Mordaunt's efforts to establish harmony and mutual love among the individuals of his family were in vain ; it soon became to be considered as composed of two parties, of which Mrs. Mordaunt and her two elder daughters formed one, and Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen the other ; the boy he had resolutely divided from his mother, and placed under the care of a friend of his own, from whose assiduity he hoped he might derive advantages that might, in some measure, make up for the years that had been mis-spent.

“ If,” said he to Mr. Thornton, with a sigh of the bitterest self-reproach, “ if I am to do justice to the understandings of my children, or to preserve their hearts from selfishness and vanity, it must be by removing them from the influence of a woman
whom

whom I once imagined possessed of every virtue that adorns humanity."

"Ah, my dear friend," said Mr. Thornton, "your mistake is not an uncommon one, the fascination of beauty always has prevailed, always will prevail. We can only render it harmless, by giving to our females such educations as will place all the useful energies of the understanding, and all the virtuous propensities of the heart, in conjunction with personal charms. If this can be done, the whole of human kind will benefit."

Ellen, disappointed in the reciprocation of affection and pleasure which she had hoped for from her own family, applied herself closer than ever to her lessons, and in the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, with the friendship of their daughter, she found no inadequate compensation for the contrary sentiments that filled the bosoms of her mother and sisters.

The

The following summer again brought Henry into Northumberland—he and Ellen met with mutual delight, and this delight increased with every hour they passed together. —

If Henry had been the companion and play-fellow of Ellen, when first they knew each other, he now became her friend—Ellen had already sorrows to disburthen—The invincible silence and apparent unconsciousness of both Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, as to the conduct of her mother and sisters towards her, left Ellen at a loss to know whether it was perceived by them or no; but such reserve on their part made clear the propriety of her continuing equally silent, and seemingly unconscious; from a feeling of delicacy, she was not more communicative to Mary.

But with Henry she had no concealments—his quick sense had instantly revealed to him the unkindness of his aunt
and

and cousins, and the warmth of his heart and temper led him to speak of it to Ellen in terms of honest indignation. Ellen was not angry, but she was grieved—she lamented her own inability to conciliate the affections of those by whom she most wished to be beloved, and to love; and Henry being made still more angry by seeing her grief, declared them, in express terms, to be unworthy of her sollicitude and regret.

Henry's partiality for Ellen was an additional motive to her mother's hatred, and her sisters jealousy. Mrs. Mordaunt had hitherto boasted of her nephew as the ornament and pride of her *own* family; and she could not but look upon it as a degradation to the dignity of that family, to see him give the most unequivocal manifestations of preferable attachment to that child of hers, whose birth, she scrupled not to declare, she considered as her greatest misfortune.

Henry,

Henry, with something of a malicious archness, who so far from concealing his partiality in compliment to his aunt, that he took every opportunity of displaying it before her, and of magnifying the merits and acquirements of Ellen, beyond all other merits and acquirements. He needed not this method for the confirmation of a passion that had taken deep root in his heart.

CHAP. VII.

“ He says he loves my daughter ;
“ I do think so too ; for never gazed the moon
“ Upon the water, as he will stand, and read,
“ As ’twere, my daughter’s eyes.”

SHAKESPEAR.

EVERY vacation, while Henry continued at school, and many days that were not vacation, when by his removal to college he became more his own master, were spent by him, upon some pretence or other, at Groby Manor ; each time he saw Ellen his attachment increased, for each time she appeared more amiable and charming in his eyes.

Perhaps the most unsuspecting proof of a good education is, that the progress of
time

time is marked by the progress of improvement in the pupil : Ellen gave this proof of the goodness of her education ; every six months she had made some acquisition in knowledge, or gave some proof that her reason strengthened, and that her passions were more under controul ; good habits were converted into virtues, and warm affections ripened into benevolence.

Those who bestow the name of education on a desultory form of instruction, often suspended through idleness, or broke in upon by frivolous and pernicious amusements, whose efforts, weak as they are, are directed wholly to filling the head, rather than to forming the heart, or cultivating the reason, cannot guess, and will not be made to believe, how much useful knowledge, how much vigour of mind, how much strength of principle, may be produced by eleven years of wisely directed and unremitted attention to those objects.

Ellen, at seventeen, with all the gaiety that belongs to that age, possessed great acuteness of discernment, much power of reason, an invincible integrity, and a command over her passions, which is not often met with in the most advanced years. Her mind was stored with useful and ornamental learning; her person was light and agile; she had the prettiest hands and feet in the world; her countenance was frank and intelligent; and her complexion clear and blooming. No one would have fallen in love with Ellen for her beauty; but being in love with her, every one must have thought her beautiful.

Henry could now sit whole hours with her at chess, or hanging over the back of her chair; any sound that she drew from her harpsichord had power to rivet him to the spot. Ellen could remark on the difference of his taste now and in former times; but she was not conscious of the change that had taken place in the nature
of

of his attachment ;—hers towards him was lively and animated, as it had always been ; but being accustomed to love him only as her cousin, she thought she loved him as her cousin still.

Henry, however, now twenty, was no stranger to the nature of the passion which wholly occupied his mind ; and being challenged upon it by his uncle, frankly declared that his hope and design were to gain the heart of Ellen ; and that, having gained it, no earthly consideration should make him forego the possession of her person.

“ But your father ?—”

“ My father has no claims upon me but those of nature : I am no eldest son, thank Heaven. To me cannot be pleaded either the pride or the avarice of my family. I am destined to work out my own support, and by that destiny my independence is secured. Oh ! my uncle, give me leave to try to gain

the affections of Ellen—do you ratify the gift, and my father neither will or can have any objection to our union.”

“ It is at least fit you consult him before you attempt to gain a heart, which, even if gained, ought not, without his concurrence, and, I flatter myself, would not remain yours.”

Oh ! thought Henry, if I were once assured of Ellen’s heart, the way would be easy.

“ Will you, Sir, explain my hopes and my wishes to my father ? You know I have never attempted concealment ; I have always thought I had a right, as one born to independence, the independence that industry gives, to indulge in a love which has possessed my heart from the first weeks of my knowledge of Ellen, and which will never depart from it but with my latest sigh.”

“ I love your frankness, and I love your ardour ; but I must tell you, you are mistaken

taken in your idea of independence. What are you, what can you be for many years to come, unsupported by your father? It is for him to say how you shall exert your industry, what assistances he will give to it, and what returns he may expect from the success of it, before you can consider yourself as being, or pretend to act as, an independent person."

"But you, Sir," said Henry, lowering his tone, "but you, Sir, would be favorable to my wishes?"

"I shall be, I must be ruled by your father; all I can give Ellen will be little; and I shall never consent to her becoming the wife of any man against the consent of his parent."

Henry's hopes seemed to totter to the foundation. "What would you have me to do, Sir?" said he, faintly: "I will put myself

myself under your direction ; I wish to consider you as my father."

" What I *require* from you is, to quit Groby Manor: I would guard Ellen from all unnecessary pain ; and therefore, if you are not to be united, I would spare her the pang of a disappointed hope—at present, with all your insinuating qualities, young man, I believe her heart is free."

" This is what you require of me," said Henry impatiently ; " what is it that you advise ?"

" That you open your mind fully to your father, and that you act implicitly as he shall direct."

" And suppose he forbids me to think more of Ellen, do you suppose I can obey him ?"

" Indeed I do, because you ought."

" And

“ And could you, Sir, at my age ?”

“ Ask me no questions—if you hope for my interest, you must do what I require and advise.”

“ With such a bribe what is it I would not do ? I will be gone this very evening, nay, within this hour ; if I were to see Ellen again, who knows but I might whisper a secret in her ear that might make her not uninterested in the success of my journey.”

“ Go, and my good wishes go with you—if you can add perseverance to your activity, you may in time have the independence you talk of, and I may have the pleasure to receive you as my son.”

Henry pressed his uncle's hand between both his in speechless agitation, and ran off to conceal his falling tears.

Henry's journey was speedy, and not wholly unsuccessful. Marriage, according

to the decision of Lord Villars, was to be put wholly out of the question for some years ; but Henry was allowed, upon these terms, to endeavour to attach Ellen to himself ; and Lord Villars promised, that when his son could prove to him that he was master of the annual sum of five hundred pounds, as the fruits of his own industry, that he should then be allowed to make her his wife. His profession was to be the law ; three hundred pounds a year Lord Villars proposed to allow him, and he engaged to continue this sum 'till Henry, by his own efforts, made the five hundred pounds per annum eight.

Henry already thought himself the husband of Ellen ; but Lord Villars's views were very different : by removing the possibility of a connexion, which it was not his desire should ever take place, to so distant and uncertain a period, he depended upon the vicissitude of human events, and the instability of human affections ; he

knew much better than Henry, how long it must of necessity be before he could perform his part of the engagement, and in the lapse of so many years he made sure of his calculation, that either the power to do so, or the will, would be lost. He might, indeed, have refused his consent altogether, but he had many reasons for not doing this. Although steady and unbending, as to the end he had in view, the means he always chose should be the gentlest possible. Experience had long confirmed him in the policy of such proceedings; if they succeeded at all, their success was more complete than any which violence could produce; and if violence must be resorted to, it ever operated with double force for having been for some time withheld. In this case he particularly attended to the character of Henry, the energy of whose mind he knew would be up in arms against manifest injustice, or manifest unreasonableness. It suited neither his family views, or his interest, to be at variance with a son, whose

superiority of character he was willing to make the instrument of family aggrandizement: he was not inattentive either to the advantage to be derived in curbing the passions and indiscretions of a young man, or of the spur that might be given to his industry, by the bait of a promised marriage with the woman of his choice, as a reward for his virtue and his exertions. But in thus holding forth the sugar-plumb for good behaviour, he by no means yielded the power of the rod, which was still to be exercised, if after circumstances made it necessary.

Henry comprehended nothing of all this—he relied equally on the good faith of his father, and his own constancy; and thanking Lord Villars for his indulgence with the most enraptured gratitude, measured back his steps to Northumberland.

Mr. Mordaunt thought Lord Villar's decision both wise and kind, and most willingly gave Henry permission to gain the heart of Ellen, if he could.

In

In the character of Henry Mr. Mordaunt saw the seeds of all those qualities that he could wish for in a husband for his daughter; but, had he then been independent, and his wishes sanctioned by the approbation of Lord Villars, Mr. Mordaunt would not willingly have trusted, at the early and tempestuous age of twenty, the happiness of Ellen to his care. His disposition was too ardent, and his taste for pleasure too eager, to have given a reasonable hope, that having thus early attained the summit of his wishes, the rest of his life would have been regulated by the dictates of reason, or even that the object which had been so easily obtained, however now highly prized, would have been able to have maintained its value in his estimation; but in the discipline of a seven or eight years study of the law, with Ellen for his reward, Mr. Mordaunt saw a course of education for Henry, that would, he doubted not, give stability to all his virtues, and train him to that power of mind, and rectitude of feeling, which

which would secure both her happiness and his own.

All these arrangements were received by Mrs. Mordaunt with a fullen discontent; she smiled scornfully at the idea of an engagement between a boy and a girl, the accomplishment of which was not to take place until so distant a period of time; and she expressed a wonder that her brother would ever consent to so foolish a contract; however, as the completion of it opened no views of splendor or greatness to Ellen, she took no trouble to oppose it, and contented herself with prophesying that it would all end ill.

Ellen, from the simplicity of her life, and the full occupation of her time, had, perhaps, thought less of love and matrimony than any girl of her age; but Henry was not the less dear to her for this. It is true, he made neither her sleeping or her waking dreams; she slept each night sound and undisturbed,

disturbed, and she arose each morning gay and active; the day was not more tedious when Henry was away, but it was infinitely more delightful when he was there; his conversation had more charms for her than that of any other of her companions: but she had no desire to enjoy his conversation apart; if things went on in their usual course, Henry occurred seldom to her mind; but if she were more than ordinarily pleased, or more than ordinarily chagrined, "Oh that my cousin were here!" was the first wish of her heart. Ellen heard the commendations of Henry with no sensation but that of a simple acquiescence in their truth; but were he blamed she was struck with surprise, and thought not so much of vindicating him, as correcting a mistake; of his merits, as equivocal, she herself never spoke, no more than of the light of the sun, they appeared equally uncontrovertable; neither thought she of denying or affirming that she loved him; to love Henry seemed to her as natural as loving herself; but had
he

he never been allowed to have returned to Northumberland, when he left it on his last visit to his father, however Ellen might have sensibly lamented the loss of her earliest friend and most loved companion, her peace would have remained secure, and her heart unwounded.

Henry had hitherto been satisfied with the kind of love that Ellen had felt for him ; but he now sought to render it more decided and appropriate.

The change in his attentions had not before escaped her, and the change in his language was still more striking. This change did not, however, displease her ; nor did it alarm her, till she began to find something very like it in herself. Ellen had been accustomed to think, nor could she proceed long heedlessly in any path ; a little reflection upon circumstances made her believe, that it was her duty to repress the too fervent expressions and intimations of Henry's regard,

gard, and to lead herself and him back to that calm state of friendship, when, however delighted to be together, they were indifferent whether it were with others or alone.

In consequence of this little plan, she avoided all *tête-à-tête* walks, all withdrawals from society, to pursue their studies or amusements together. Sometimes she assumed an air of reserve, when his heart was running over at his lips, and at others appeared not to understand what was spoken in the most express terms.

Henry was in despair, for he did not find out that all these were symptoms the most decided in his favour.

Mr. Mordaunt amused himself for some time with their mutual embarrassment, and, as he had no objection to the hook striking deep into the heart of Ellen, he suffered her thus to play with the line 'till she was completely entangled in it.

Having

Having heard her one day resolutely deaf to the earnest sollicitation of Henry for a walk in the wood, and having seen him in consequence walk off in a huff, while she remained thoughtful and silent at her work :

“ How comes this, Ellen ?” said he ; “ it seems as if Henry and you were not upon such good terms as formerly ?”

Ellen blushed.

“ Or are you upon better ?” said Mr. Mordaunt archly. Ellen blushed a deeper dye ; and almost hiding her face in her handkerchief, she replied faintly : “ It might be possible I might see too much of my cousin.”

“ And do you think if there were danger that you might see *too* much of your cousin, I should have suffered you to have seen *so* much ?”

Ellen

Ellen, raised her eyes hastily to her father, and as hastily let them fall again.

“ Come, my dear Ellen, if I were your lover, I might, perhaps, enjoy your confusion, but as your father I must relieve you from it. You may follow Henry into the wood; and whatever he may say to you there, be assured he has mine and his father’s sanction for.”

The inexpressible joy that filled the heart of Ellen at these words, first told her how much such a sanction was necessary to her happiness.

Whether Ellen followed Henry into the wood, or whether she waited for the explanation, till he followed her there, may be left to the decision of every female who reads their story; but certain it is, that from this evening he had an allowed interest in her heart.

Like

Like him, she had a perfect reliance on his constancy, and his industry ; but he did not so fully agree with her, that their happiness was likely to be more permanent from being established on the grounds of prudence and forbearance, than if they were, maugre all such considerations, to begin it from that moment.

It mattered not, however, as to the effect, what was the opinion of either of them on this point ; from the decree which had declared their marriage should not take place till Henry's application produced him five hundred pounds a year, there lay no appeal.

Henry took chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and began his legal career with equal diligence and acuteness ; every vacation he spent at Groby Manor, and he was earnest in displaying, both to Ellen and her father, his habits of application and economy : Ellen relying upon his affection, and pleased with

with her prospects in life, had no jealousies to alarm, or anxieties to disturb her ; she pursued, uninterruptedly, her accustomed course of studies and amusements ; and as she grew more her own mistress, and more independent, they were improved into pleasures of the purest kind, by being enabled to render her benevolence more active, and by suffering her affections to take a wider range.

She had now nearly attained her nineteenth year, and she had resided wholly at Groby Manor for the last twelve months ; she continued, however, to live much with Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, under whose dearly beloved roof many hours of every day were passed ; nor could any affection exceed that which subsisted between her and its highly valued inhabitants ; the gratifications of taste, and the feelings of the heart, formed the ties that bound them to each other, and the sense of obligation, received and communicated, rendered them indissoluble.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

“ I'll no say, men are villains a' ;——

“ The real harden'd wicked,

“ Who hae nae check but human law,

“ Are to a few restricted :

“ But oh ! mankind are unco weak,

“ An' little to be trusted,

“ If self the wavering balance shake,

“ Its rarely right adjusted.”

BURNS.

IT was at this time that Lord Villars invited his sister and her whole family to his house in Hampshire. He had formed for his eldest son a matrimonial connexion, with Lady Almeria Western, an heiress of a large

a large fortune, to whom he was guardian. To bring this matter to the desired issue, had cost him much artifice and trouble, and the success of his plans filled him with not less pride than pleasure. The lady was still very young, and as his son had no attractions either of person or manner, he was eager to complete the marriage before her comparative powers would lead her to make such distinctions as might probably break it off for ever. As she added a very competent share of beauty to the attractions of her thousands, it was not to be doubted but that if she appeared in the world Mr. Villars would meet with many competitors, and Lord Villars had none of that blind parental partiality that could conceal from him, in any degree, the danger of such a competition. The marriage, it was therefore determined, should take place immediately ; it was to be celebrated in the country, and Lord Villars wished, by making every circumstance relative to
it

it as splendid and dazzling as possible, to persuade the young bride that she was an enviable and a happy woman.

Mr. Mordaunt willingly accepted the invitation, both as an indulgence to his wife and his elder daughters, and from a desire to introduce Ellen to a more intimate knowledge of a family than any she had yet attained, of which she was some time to make one. Henry was also to leave the dust and dullness of his chambers, upon this festive occasion; nor was there to be any one circumstance omitted that could contribute to the satisfaction of any of the individuals who were to form the party to be assembled; joy and happiness were to pervade the whole.—But how vain are the plans of human wisdom! The triteness of the observation is the proof of its truth.

Three days before the intended nuptials, the destined bridegroom was thrown from
his

his horse, and received a hurt, that in thrice as many hours deprived him of life.

It would be impossible to describe the degrees and variety of sorrow this event gave occasion for. Lady Villars wept as a tender mother; her children were affected in a more or less degree, according to their age and sensibility. Lady Almeria was more stunned than afflicted. Mrs. Mordaunt saw, with grief, the path that this event opened to the exaltation of Ellen. Henry's unfeigned sorrow for the death of his brother was not unmingled with a tumultuous sensation, arising from the change that had thereby arisen in his own situation, and the uncertainty how that change might operate on the dearest wishes of his heart.

These various emotions, however, were all within the bounds of moderation; but, to the grief and disappointment of Lord Villars, there were no bounds. The sorrows of a parent on the death of a child

appeared to be sacred and unquestionable ; all hearts of common humanity sympathized with Lord Villars ; but few, if any, suspected the source from whence the extremity of his affliction proceeded.—He had lost his son ; this loss might be supplied—but with his son he had lost the heiress ; that heiress, by the fortunes of whom every branch of his family were to be benefitted, on whose property he had formed an idea, a superstructure of greatness and power, which could be realized by no other means, and the demolition of which filled him with the cruelest pangs. There was indeed one way, but it was nearly hopeless.

On Henry had devolved the rights and the titles of his brother ; could he be prevailed upon to fulfil his engagements ? Lord Villars had often wished him in his brother's place ; the superiority of his character fitted him for the head of his family ; but the decrees of nature could not be reversed, and Lord Villars had endeavoured

to

to persuade himself that wealth and rank might bestow, even upon his eldest son, the consequence that character had denied—They might, however, now be united—they must—they *should* be united. Lord Villars had taken his resolution, and it remained only to think of the means that might put it into force.

The first step was to break Henry's engagement with Ellen; but it was an act of so violent and irritating a nature, as to make almost hopeless every consequence that Lord Villars wished to follow from it. It was, however, necessary, and that without which nothing could be done. Lord Villars well knew the tender feelings of Henry; and though he were aware he should in vain attempt to overcome his spirit, he was not without hopes but that he might work upon his heart.

For this purpose, the genuine sorrow that the first sense of his disappointment inflicted,

was succeeded in Lord Villars by a counterfeit affliction, in appearance as deep, as heart-breaking, and as incapable of consolation as was ever felt by a parent for the loss of an only and highly-beloved offspring.

Henry soon lost every other thought in commiseration for his father, and in anxious endeavours to console him ; but Lord Villars was not to be consoled—he could no longer endure to remain at a place where he had been deprived of the hopes of his future life ; he wished to remove to a smaller house that he had on the borders of the county, and he wished only to have for his companions Lady Villars, Lady Almeria, Mrs. Mordaunt, and Henry ; of Lady Almeria, indeed, he was become so fond, that he could not bear her from his sight. “ She was the beloved of his lost son, how could she be otherwise than inexpressibly dear to him ? ”

For the desire of retaining Mrs. Mordaunt he gave more genuine reasons. He knew there

there were no schemes for the aggrandizement of her *own* family (as she always took care to denominate that of the Villars's) and for the mortification of Ellen, that she would not with equal avidity seek to promote ; he therefore said, with the most perfect sincerity, "that from her company he hoped more than from any other toward soothing his mind," and he earnestly entreated Mr. Mordaunt to leave her with him for a few weeks, promising, at the end of that period, to bring her himself into Northumberland, there, with Mr. Mordaunt's permission, he would stay some time, as he hoped, from the quiet and seclusion in which he might there live, to regain more composure and happiness than he could expect to derive from more busy and public scenes."

It was not possible for Mr. Mordaunt to refuse his consent to any part of what Lord Villars proposed ; but in spite of his wish to repel all suspicion from his mind, there was something in Lord Villars's conduct that

F 3

excited

excited very uneasy sensations, as to the rectitude of his future intentions.

Without his being able to fix on any one circumstance that could justify his fears, Mr. Mordaunt was strongly possessed by the apprehension that Lord Villars's grief was a cover to designs inimical to the happiness of Henry and Ellen. There appeared too much plan and arrangement in all he did, to proceed from a mind wholly immersed in grief, as he pretended his to be. The extravagant attachment that he professed to Lady Almeria, with the almost total neglect that he manifested to Ellen, with the perfect silence he maintained as to the engagements subsisting between her and Henry, and the excluding her from a party where she would so properly have made one, all contributed to strengthen this apprehension.

Lady Villars, who had become extremely fond of Ellen, had expressed a wish that she

she might continue with her ; but this had been mentioned only once, and seemed to be no more thought of. Henry, who had not supposed it possible it should be intended she should leave him, expressed the utmost astonishment and reluctance when he found it was so designed ; and he was told by Mrs. Mordaunt, that it was at the particular request of Mr. Mordaunt that Ellen was to go away.

All these circumstances conspired to impress Mr. Mordaunt's mind with very serious fears ; but he was withheld by delicacy and respect to the sorrow Lord Villars displayed, from coming to any explanation upon the subject with him at this time ; he knew the delay of a few weeks could be of no importance, and he was willing to hope that, by giving Lord Villars more time for reflection, he might be led to see the injustice of any hasty design, that the poignancy of his present disappointment might have suggested, of separating Henry and Ellen.

He was also cautious not to betray any suspicion that might seem to suggest the possibility of such a measure being adopted, and still more so to avoid giving a sanction to such breach of faith, by seeming to expect it. He contented himself therefore with saying to Lord Villars, that he should be truly glad to afford him every consolation that he could derive from the retirement of Groby Manor, and the unwearied attentions of his family to every thing likely to contribute to his satisfaction ; and that Ellen, he was assured, would think it as much her pleasure as her duty to do all in her power to supply the loss he had sustained.

“ We will talk farther of such things,” said Lord Villars hastily, “ when I rejoin you in Northumberland, and it shall not be long before I do so.”

Divided between hope and fear, as to what were Lord Villars's future plans, Mr. Mordaunt returned, with his daughters, to
Groby

Groby Manor. But to Ellen he communicated neither the one or the other, and happily for the ease of her mind, no suspicion similar to her father's had found admittance there. Since the death of Mr. Villars she had been wholly occupied with the feelings of others, and all thought of self had been lost in her solicitude to administer to the comfort of those around her—the change that had taken place in the situation of Henry had been brought about by so disastrous an event, that it never presented itself to her mind under the form of pleasure; but neither did it ever occur to her that a circumstance that secured him an immediate situation in life, more affluent than that which he was to have attained by the slow progress of his personal efforts, could be the means of placing a barrier between them, who were so certainly to have been united when those efforts were crowned with success.

She returned, however, saddened by the scenes she had witnessed, by her separation from Henry, and by something of an unsettled notion, that though Lady Villars was all kindness and affection towards her, Lord Villars had shewn her more marks of neglect than regard.

CHAP. IX.

“ With a father’s frown at last

“ He sternly disapprov’d.”

OLD BALLAD.

LORD VILLARS and his family were now removed to the Grove, and Henry appeared so assiduous in his efforts to administer comfort to his father, and so sincerely touched with the continuance of his grief, that Lord Villars was led to believe that he might safely begin his operations—

One day, therefore, as they were alone together, Lord Villars, as usual, apparently immersed in sorrow, and Henry, as usual, exerting

exerting all his faculties to rouse and amuse him. "My dear father," said he, with emotion, "it goes to my heart to see you thus overcome with a fruitless affliction; for my sake, for the sake of your family, endeavour to recover more power of mind."

"I am, indeed, overcome with affliction; but it is for the sake of my family that I am thus overwhelmed."

"My dear Sir, we all know your parental feelings; we all know the loss that—"

"No, Henry, it is not *that*; it is not any selfish sorrow that overwhelms me; I could bear my own loss, but it is the ruin of my family involved in that loss which I deplore."

Henry started—thoughts rushed into his mind, that if they had ever found entrance there before he had repelled, as too affrontive to the honor of his father, to be entertained for a moment."

"The

“The eldest son of a noble and not opulent family,” continued Lord Villars, “stands in so many relative situations, that his death, when his place cannot be fully supplied by a succeeding brother, is no single misfortune—it inflicts no single wound—every branch of that family, however widely diverged, must sustain an incurable evil.”—

Henry was silent ; he felt no inclination in himself to take his brother's place—to heal these wounds—Lord Villars went on.

“You know the princely fortunes that Lady Almeria was to have brought to your brother ; but you are mistaken, if you suppose the advantages would all have been his ; you, your brothers, your sisters, the whole innumerable tribe of you, would have felt the beneficial effects of her property through your lives, and in your posterity perhaps beyond the latest period of them.”

“My

"My brother's death," said Henry coolly, "was very unfortunate both in its circumstances and effects."

"In its circumstances it certainly was; but it depends upon you to say whether it shall be so in its effects."

"Upon me, my Lord?" said Henry, affecting more surprise than he felt.

"My dear son, I have no reason to doubt the rectitude of your principles, or the tenderness of your heart, I can therefore have no doubt how you will act; but it is painful to me that your duty and inclination should be, however little, divided."

"Divided, my Lord! no, thank Heaven, they are united, and united in such bonds as no power whatever can dissolve."

"How

“ How you charm me, my dearest son ! and how true is it, that ‘ a wise son maketh a glad father.’ ”

Lord Villars was not accustomed to quote Scripture ; Henry’s heart was not the lighter for his doing so upon this occasion.

“ It is necessary, my Lord, that we should understand each other. I presume that we both mean that it is my duty to maintain engagements entered into voluntarily, and authorised by your sanction ? ”

“ Undoubtedly, all such engagements as *can* be kept ; but when a change of circumstances has changed not only the nature of duties, but of possibilities, engagements that cannot be fulfilled dissolve themselves. I am assured that your own natural sense tells you that you cannot *now* marry Ellen.”

“ Not marry Ellen ! What power shall hinder me ? ”

“ The

“ The power of your own mind, Sir, the sense of right, the dread of my never-ceasing abhorrence.”

Henry writhed with agony.

“ It is to your understanding, it is to your justice I appeal. Where is now that independence on which alone you grounded your right to choose for yourself? Is it your own interest, or the interest of others, that in pursuing that choice you would sacrifice? Had you from the first been placed in the circumstances you are now in, should you have dared to have proposed such a choice to me? Do you believe me sufficiently weak, or wicked, to have sanctioned such a choice? You are no longer the person you were when I did sanction it; you have no longer the same rights, the same duties; you must no longer have the same conduct.”

“ Let

“ Let me then,” said Henry, with a new-born hope springing up in his soul, and brightening his eye, “ let me then resume that station, where only can my happiness and my duty be reconciled; let me again become a younger brother; to Frederic, with all my heart and soul, will I make over all my rights of primogenitureship.”

“ It is not in your power, Sir; you cannot give him your title, unworthy as you are to retain it.”

“ And what is title without honor? You require me to give up the one, and yet are tenacious of the other.”

“ I am jealous of both alike, Sir, and will not see either prostituted to the romantic fancy of a boy.”

“ You wrong my affection, my Lord; indeed you wrong it; it is founded on reason and on virtue.”

“ I should

“ I should be less surprised at the warmth with which you pursue it,” returned Lord Villars, with a sarcastic smile, “ if it were founded upon beauty ; your passion, Henry, wants the stamp that will alone make it pass current in the world.”

“ Beauty ! Ellen is an angel.”

“ Yet this angel of yours will have no objection to becoming your wife, though she bring you for her dowry *ruin* and a father's detestation.”

“ Oh! no, no, she would reject, she would renounce me for ever, rather—”

“ And can you admire that rectitude of mind in her that you refuse to imitate ? But we talk not of your ruin, Sir, after the degeneracy of mind that you have betrayed in this conversation ; were you alone concerned, I would not trouble myself to withhold you from it. But *I* must not so far forget

forget *my* duties, whatever *you* do *yours*, as to suffer you to involve in your destruction the destruction of a family. My hopes for the establishment of you all were placed on your brother's match with Lady Almeria: you have succeeded to your brother's rights, and to his engagements; and, however unworthy of it, you have also succeeded to his place in Lady Almeria's heart; she views you, ungrateful boy as you are, with but too favourable an eye: Upon you it depends to give wealth and happiness, or poverty and wretchedness, to your parents and to your family. We shall see the kind of heart you have by the election you make."

"The happiness that derives wholly from wealth, and the wretchedness that is dependent alone upon poverty, are both, in my eyes, too unsubstantial to deserve any sacrifices—my Lord, do with me as you will—but I will *never* be the husband of Lady Almeria."

"And

“ And remember, peremptory Sir, that but under my heaviest malediction shall you ever become the husband of Ellen.”

The father and son here parted, and from this day the farce of affliction, except in public, was over.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

“ Alas ! how oft does goodness wound itself,
“ And sweet affection prove the source of woe.”

HOME.

BUT if the bosom of Lord Villars seemed lightened from a load of woe, that of Henry became insupportably oppressed.

However he might be roused by the thought of ill-treatment to a resolute assertion of his own rights, or however firmly his heart might be attached to Ellen, or his determination be unchangeably fixed never to abandon her, he could not be unmoved

moved by the displeasure of his father, or by the thought that in a parent's eye he was the cause of unhappiness to himself, or family; neither could he be insensible of the truth of many of Lord Villars's arguments, or unconscious that a marriage with Ellen in the present circumstances would be attended with many inconveniencies; but the thought that dwelt most upon his mind, and the grief that pressed the heaviest upon his heart, arose from the probability that now this marriage would never take place. He believed he knew her too well to flatter himself that she would become his wife against the express prohibition of his father, and perhaps he prized her integrity too highly to wish that she should do so; but the sense of this integrity, the certainty of the virtues from which it arose, made the supposition that he should never call her his, an agony that he knew not how to endure—He distracted himself with endeavouring to find out some middle way, that might reconcile his father's expectations, and his

own ideas of happiness ; but wherever he turned, his detested title, like Dejanira's fatal gift, stuck close, and filled him with torment and despair.

His father often returned to the attack, sometimes with an appeal to his generosity and his reason, and then was his resolution most in danger of yielding, and his heart torn with the extremest anguish—sometimes with the high tone of authority, and the most severe denunciations of everlasting displeasure. Here Henry was invulnerable ; when he was threatened he became as the rock, which seems but the more firmly fixed by the storm that beats against it.

He knew, however, that if he did not yield, neither would his father, and that in any case his happiness, and in the former both his happiness and filial duty must go to wreck. Of Lady Almeria he thought little, yet it was some addition to his unhappiness

happiness to see evident marks of that partiality with which his father had told him she distinguished him.

This was in part the work of Mrs. Mordaunt, and it was the business in which Lord Villars had from the first engaged her.

Lady Almeria, even before the death of Mr. Villars, had not been wholly insensible to the difference which nature had made between the brothers; she had not been entirely without some wandering thoughts, that if Henry had been the elder brother, her destiny would have been the happier; but she was too young and too giddy to have suffered those thoughts to have sunk deep in her mind, had it not been for the artifices and management of Mrs. Mordaunt, who insinuated how generous it would be in Lady Almeria to turn her affections to Henry; she formed the hope that he might return those affections, and it was by her skill and care that the strength

Strength of his engagements with Ellen were concealed from Lady Almeria ; all these were, however, unnecessary cares, and founded wholly upon the imperfect knowledge that had yet been attained of the disposition of Lady Almeria.

Scarcely escaped from the nursery, she was little known, and she had credit given her for infinitely more feeling and delicacy than she possessed : Of love she was incapable ; but having quick perceptions, and a tolerable power of discriminating characters, she was well formed for taking strong, though transient likings, and while such prepossessions lasted, it would not have been any consideration for the peace or honour of another, that would have withheld her from the gratification of them. Stimulated by the arts of Mrs. Mordaunt, and moved by her own taste, she had taken this kind of fancy to Henry ; and provided she could inspire him with the like, she troubled her head little with the nature of those engagements

VOL. I. G that

that had once subsisted between him and Ellen; it was not in Henry's nature to be rude or careless, especially where a woman, and a young and pretty woman was concerned; his address, therefore, to Lady Almeria was gentle and obliging; and though she would rather it had been impassioned or gay, yet she hoped both these modes were to come, when he had got over the odd fancy, as she called it, of grieving for the death of a brother, which had made him heir to a title and an estate of seven thousand pounds a year.

In the mean time, Henry alike unable wholly to explain his distress, or wholly to conceal it from Ellen, wrote her letters that filled her with the cruellest disquietude—she knew not how to shape her fears, but every added line told her that some misfortune awaited her. Whether she were to suffer with or apart from Henry she knew not; whether she were to be the sport of his inconstancy, or the victim of his prudence,

she was unable, from the tenor of his letters, to resolve. Had she been to have chosen her fate, the decision was easy. The resignation of Henry she thought herself equal to, but under his depravity or unkindness she believed she must sink.

In this state of her mind, she was as little able to express her wishes and her fears with clearness, as was Henry himself; she called upon him again and again to explain himself; while he, sometimes thinking he saw a flexibility in his father that revived his hope, and sometimes, from his increased severity, relapsing into despair, alternately awakened the hopes and the fears of Ellen, without explaining to her his grounds for either.

Mr. Mordaunt saw the uneasiness of Ellen, and but too truly divined the cause; he forbore, however, to press her upon the subject, and though she would frankly have opened her heart to him, had she had

any thing certain to tell, she shrunk from conversing with him on a mystery that might involve the condemnation of Henry.

Mr. Mordaunt wrote repeatedly both to Lord Villars and Mrs. Mordaunt, to remind them of their promise, of joining him in Northumberland, but hitherto without receiving any satisfactory answer. Lord Villars, however, beginning now to be convinced he had nothing to hope either from the ambition, the reason, or the obedience of Henry, resolved to try his influence with Ellen, and by making her renounce his son, render it a matter of indifference, as far as their engagements, whether his son would renounce her or no : He determined therefore to set out for Northumberland. He wished to conceal his intention from his son, but Henry had too much at stake to be easily thrown off his guard, or lulled into a false security.

He

He had considered, that while his father continued in Hampshire the contest lay wholly between them, and that there was at least a chance that his obstinacy might out-tire that of his father's. While this was possible, he forbore to explain himself with Ellen, unwilling to impress her mind with the painful sense of his father's injustice, or to make a parade of his own constancy, but he was aware that Lord Villars's removal into Northumberland was with the design of bringing the dispute before another tribunal, and a tribunal where he knew the voice of love would plead in vain, were it once imagined to be opposed by that of reason or of rectitude.

Not a moment therefore was to be lost, lest Ellen might be interested in the decision, by an undue application to her generosity, or by a belief, though but a momentary one, that he could hesitate in his. He was therefore no sooner convinced that Lord Villars meant to begin his jour-

ney to Northumberland in a few days, than he dispatched a messenger with the following letter :

“ The moment that any longer concealment would be unavailing and dangerous is now come. Imagine, my dearest Ellen, the greatest sacrifice that can be made to avarice and ambition, and then know that such a sacrifice is required of me. While there remained a hope that the ear of reason and of justice would be open to my arguments, and my rights, I forbore to shock you with an instance of depravity, that I blush to think proceeds from one I am bound to reverence and to love. It having been found, however, that I am invincible, I know that the attack is about to be transferred from me to you. It is meant that you should be subdued by your virtues—but remember, dearest creature, that they are not your own rights you will be called upon to resign, they are mine—my just, my sanctioned, my unalienable rights—remember,

member, that I never will resign them while I breathe.—Beware of a false generosity, a mistaken virtue—disinterestedness, in this case, would be injustice ; you are mine, my chosen love, my betrothed wife :—I have had my father's word that you should be my wife :—Circumstances may be changed, but I am the same ; be you so too, my Ellen, and we shall weather this storm, which now seems to threaten the wreck of our happiness—but our happiness cannot be lost while we preserve our virtues. It is by virtue, by the most solemn engagements we are bound to each other ; let us ever keep our principles in view, lest we be misled by the *ignis fatuus* of sophistry. That cannot be generous which is unjust ; be just to me, my Ellen, and I fear not your generosity to others

“ I must remain where I am while my father continues here ; but no sooner does he set out for Groby Manor, than I do so too ; and you may trust that speed will be the swiftest, that is winged by love.”

CHAP. XI.

“ Tra sì e no la Giovane sospesa

—Dubita un poco.

“ Quinci l'Onore il debito le pesa,

“ Quindi l'incalza l'amoroso Foco.”

ARIOSTO.

THIS letter was received by Ellen with a variety of emotions: She read in it a certainty of her misfortune, but she read in it also an assurance of the constancy and generosity of Henry:—She acknowledged no right that could divide her from him, but she trembled at the power that in adhering

hering to him she knew she must oppose;—her heart told her, there was no happiness without Henry, and the sense of rectitude shewed her, that there was no escape from misery in becoming his wife, under the prohibition of a parent.

She had now no reason for any reserve to her father; she shewed him Henry's letter, which, however, told him nothing but what his penetration had before discovered.

“Is it possible,” said he, “that Lord Villars can be thus cruel and unjust?”

“If he design to appeal to me,” said Ellen, “he must mean to abide by my decision.”

“And your decision, my Ellen, what would be your decision?”

“Alas! I know not. It is no broad path that lies before me—Intricate and scarcely

to be made out by such an one as I, is the line of duty, that, if I could be sure of, I hope I should pursue."

Mr. Mordaunt pressed Ellen to his heart.

" Henry pleads his rights strongly ; they are indubitable ; they cannot be cancelled by the mandate of ambition or avarice, though issued by a parent. But to be the author of his ruin, and his filial disobedience—Oh ! my father, such decisions are beyond my reasoning faculties, they must be decided by the impulse of my heart, not, I hope, more firmly attached to Henry than to virtue."

" Excellent creature !" said Mr. Mordaunt, and Ellen felt herself encouraged by the praise.

" It may be generous and right that Henry should refuse to abandon me : It may be virtuous and necessary that I should resign him."

Thus

Thus did poor Ellen endeavour to balance the reasons that made for and against her wishes ; but she bewildered her understanding without relieving her heart.

“ I will see Lord Villars—I will hear, (dangerous as it may be) I will hear Henry. If I must lose him, he shall not be torn from me, I will give him up. Oh ! my father, if the sacrifice must be made, allow me to make it.”

“ No other can make it :—I abjure Lord Villars’s sophistry—Having once authorized your engagements with Henry, I cannot recal my sanction ; you are mistress of your fate—I am willing to assist your judgment, but I must not controul your will.”

“ My will ? ” said Ellen, sighing, “ alas ! how little must that be consulted in this debate.”

Ellen passed three days in what might be called a labyrinth of thought, rather than a
G 6 chain

chain of reasoning;—when from what she regarded as an evident principle of duty, “the strict adherence to her engagements,” she had drawn conclusions the most favorable to her happiness, her deductions were crossed by a principle as evident, that of the obedience of children to their parents, and all her reasoning thrown into confusion. Again she began, again she found herself conducted to a certain point, and again confused and bewildered, that she found she had lost her way.

From such a maze of contrary obligations she knew not how to extricate herself; yet she lost not hope, while she perceived that which ever way she turned, wherever she directed her view, *the wish to do right* still appeared as a beacon on a distant hill, pointing out the coast to which she meant to direct her course.

It was impossible, except where the mind was wholly given up to selfishness, or resentment,

sentment, to live with Ellen without loving her; the evenness of her temper, her promptitude in obliging, must subdue all lesser prejudices. This had been the case with her sisters, though their early estrangement from her, and the difference that subsisted in their manner of thinking, forbade any of that tender interest and interchangement of sentiments in which true friendship consists; they now loved her full as well as most reputed friends love each other, and now that pity was added to their affection, they felt and shewed for her a solicitude, that neither they or herself had before thought them capable of.

Charlotte in particular was much moved by the evident distress of Ellen's mind, and the calmness with which she endured it—she thought there was something heroic in such composure, under such circumstances, and she exerted all her abilities to console and support her: But, however Ellen was soothed by her sympathy, she could not be assisted

assisted by her counsel. Charlotte could see the matter only in one light—she expatiated on the injustice of Lord Villars, on the merit of constancy, and the obligation of maintaining an engagement; and when Ellen pressed her with the question—“Would you, Charlotte, be the wife of any man, who in forming his ties with you, must break all those that bind him to his family, and incur the everlasting resentment of his parent?” Charlotte could only reply, Lord Villars had no right to be displeased, and that the peace of Henry ought to be dearer to her than that of all his family beside.

“But the peace of Henry,” said Ellen, “is involved in the religious performance of his duty as a son.”

“No,” Charlotte would reply, “such conduct as Lord Villars holds dissolves the bonds of filial duty; you ought to set him at defiance, and be happy in the love of each other.”

Ellen

Ellen would have been glad to have thought so too ; but in a mind as free from the prejudices of selfishness as her's was, things are not seen as they are wished to be, but as they are.

On the evening of the third day, Charlotte and Ellen were walking in the wood, wholly engrossed with this one subject, when, as they were returning to the house, they were suddenly met by Henry.

“ We are once more together, my Ellen,” cried he, snatching her to his heart, “ and no power on earth shall part us.”

Ellen, who had been engaged rather in debating whether she should choose misfortune, than in deploring it as already felt, had, since he receipt of Henry's last letter, been more depressed than agitated ; but his sudden appearance, and the vehemence of his address, communicated in a moment to her bosom all the emotion with which
his

his own was convulsed ;—sinking from his arms, rather than being able to try to disengage herself from them, “ We are indeed together,” said she, “ but, alas ! upon what terms ? ”

“ Upon terms that Heaven and earth must approve—Upon terms that give me a right to say, I will never resign you.”

“ Oh ! be less vehement ! ” cried she, and resting wholly upon Charlotte, her convulsive sobs gave Henry the most lively alarm ;—never had he seen distress in this form ; never had he before seen the countenance of Ellen disfigured by the violence of any passion.

“ Why not rest in my arms ? Why not weep in my bosom ? ” cried he mildly ; “ am I not your husband ? Oh ! Ellen, is it possible you can have decided against me ? ”

“ No,

"No, no, no!" said she. Charlotte unable to support her, yielded her to the impassioned Henry, who holding her in his arms, sat down with her on the grass. Tears relieved the almost bursting heart of Ellen; she suffered them for some time to flow as she hid her face on Henry's shoulder; then rousing herself, "I am better," said she; "let us return to the house, and, my dear Henry, if you would have me able to act as you wish, you must not thus distress me."

"Dearest Ellen forgive me, I will be all calmness, all reason."

Ellen with difficulty moved along, but growing every moment more composed, the emotion that the sudden appearance of Henry had given her, taught her the more to fear the power of her feelings, and to arm herself with double resolution against being governed by them. As they approached the house they were met hastily by Mr. Mordaunt.

"Do

“Do you know who is arrived?” said he.

“My father,” cried Henry, “how nearly has he eluded my vigilance!”

Now, said Ellen to herself, is the moment of trial come. Lord Villars appeared, Henry saw the pallid check of Ellen, and the whiteness of her lips.

“My Ellen,” cried he, “do not desert yourself, do not desert me.”

“Oh, Heaven direct me!” said Ellen.

“Heaven does direct you, Heaven dictates what you ought to do, Heaven cannot approve of violated vows.”

“Nor of disobedience!” said Lord Villars sternly.

“Forbear,” said Ellen to Henry, “my Lord——”

“Forgive

"Forgive my interruption, Madam; to you I mean no harshness; to the rectitude of your mind I know I may appeal, from the ungoverned passions of that intemperate young man."

"Temperance were treachery in this case. My Lord, I see your design, you mean to tamper with the virtues of Ellen, you mean to subdue her constancy by her generosity—but—"

"I am above disguise, Sir; I do mean to prove the virtue you have so vaunted; it is you who have said, that Ellen would renounce you for ever, rather than accept you at the price of your disobedience."

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Henry.

"And most truly have you said, my Henry," interrupted Ellen; "and most sincerely do I thank you for it."

"I never

" I never said so ; or, if I did—Oh ! Ellen, do not undo both yourself and me."

" My Lord," said Mr. Mordaunt, " you are too precipitate—Ellen ought not to be, she *shall* not be so persecuted ; you have nothing to fear, nothing that you ought to fear from her coolest deliberation, and it is only the coolest deliberation that ought to decide in such a case as this."

And yet, thought Ellen to herself, the decision is made ; what but *one* thing can I do ?

" I meant not to have been thus precipitate—I meant not now to have entered upon the subject, but the daring impatience of that unworthy boy—my dear Madam," turning to Ellen, " I know and revere your virtues ; it is from them I hope the salvation of my family ; pray take my arm, let me support you."

" My Lord, I want no support."

" Yes,

“ Yes, my Ellen, you do ; you want the support of a parent,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ take my arm.”—“ Thank you, Sir,” said Ellen faintly, and almost overcome, and resting on her father’s arm she reached the house.

Here she found Mrs. Mordaunt, who greeted her with her usual coldness ; but seeing her agitation said, “ Yes, yes, I knew it would come to this ; I always foretold this ; I always said that the interests of a whole family were not to be sacrificed to the foolish fancy of a boy and girl, who knew not what was good for them.”—“ Dear Mamma !” said Charlotte.

“ No harm, Ma’am,” said Ellen mildly, “ shall happen to any body through my means, if I can prevent it.”

“ Retire, my dear,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ I am sure you wish to be in your own room.”

Ellen

Ellen moved towards the door, but Henry, who had hitherto kept a gloomy silence, now rushed forward: "You do not go, Ellen, you do not go, without suffering me to speak to you, without hearing what I have to say."

"She knows you have nothing to say," interrupted Lord Villars, "that she ought to hear; Ellen is indeed the excellent person that you have always described her, the exemplar of her sex."

"Henry has a right to be heard, my Lord, and I mean to hear him; nor have I more inclination than I have power to refuse him."

"My kind, my beloved Ellen." Ellen held out her hand to him, "Oh!" said she, in a low voice, "that I could be as much the one as I believe I am the other!" Then speaking aloud, "At eight to-morrow morning I will see you alone; at present I beg I may be allowed to retire."

Lord

Lord Villars, who believed he saw the destruction of his hopes in the severity of her air towards him, and her kind indulgence to his son, stood thunderstruck and confounded, while the wretched Henry, who augured the contrary but too justly, even from her very kindness, sunk spiritless into a chair, while the warm blood forsook his cheek, and every limb quivered with agitation. Lord Villars endeavoured, by a long detail of the circumstances of his family, to convince Mr. Mordaunt's reason of the necessity of the conduct he held, and by artful praises of Ellen to sooth the indignity offered to her. Mr. Mordaunt disdained to reply to his reasonings, or to thank him for his commendations; he assured him, that it was neither the wish of his daughter, or himself, that she should enter into his family without his approbation.

“ But, my Lord,” said he, “ you have in my opinion, by your former sanction to the affections of your son, put it out of
your

your power now to withhold your consent to his marriage. All you have a right to do, is to endeavour to convince both him and my daughter of the inconvenience that now attends it, and to induce them, if possible, by the weight of your reasons, to resign rights, which nothing but the most apparent injustice can withhold."

Lord Villars was stung to the quick by the cold contempt of Mr. Mordaunt.

"I am then to undo my whole family for a punctilio? Mine was only a conditional consent, it *could* only be a conditional consent. It was my *second* son that I would have allowed to have married your daughter; no one would have dared to have asked me for my first."

"Nor do I ask you now, my Lord; but if you have made a bad bargain, common honesty requires that you should stand to it,

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except those with whom you have made it will generously release you."

"Would you then," said Mrs. Mordaunt (passionately) "would you have an ancient and noble family fall into ruin, rather than thwart the momentary fancy of a foolish girl and an obstinate boy? Rather be all the engagements that have been made since the days of Adam broken, than that such a consequence should be incurred."

"Ellen would bring ruin into no family: I have, however, said, that I think she and Henry are the only proper umpires in this dispute, and I could wish a subject to be dropped, upon which, if I speak at all, I must speak very harsh truths."

"I would endeavour," said Lord Villars, with an air as if he were to be a sufferer for conscience sake, "I would endeavour to get over the scruples of my mind, in allowing one unworthy child to take his own way to ruin,

ruin, which it seems with some people would much exalt my character, but when the interests of my other dear and innocent children are involved in his folly, however my name may be branded, I will adhere to what I know to be right; and though I may be unable to prevent this act of madness, I will never have to reproach myself with having consented to it."

"Your Lordship may rest perfectly at ease both as to your conscience and the part Ellen will take; however either she or myself may wish her the wife of your son, we can have no desire that she should become *your* daughter."

"I see, however," said Lord Villars, in a passion, "I see that she designs it; but at her peril let her pursue the design—poverty while I live, and my eternal curse when I come to die, shall sadden her days, and torment her mind."

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt arose, "I leave you, my Lord, and I would leave you under the mistake that so unworthily afflicts you; but when you find yourself master of your wishes, you shall not have cause to think that you owe the completion of them either to the duplicity or the vehemence of your conduct. I know Ellen perfectly well, and I will stake my life that in the present circumstances she will *never* marry your son."

Lord Villars, on an assurance so agreeable to him, felt all his anger subside in a moment; he did not wish to quarrel with Mr. Mordaunt, therefore, catching his hand, he cried, "My dear brother forgive me, forgive the effusions of a father's solicitude for a large family, whose well being in the world depends upon the issue of the present contest: how willingly would I make any sacrifice short of the interest of this family, for the happiness of being still more closely united with you."

Mr. Mordaunt withdrew his hand.

“ You will give me leave to retire, my Lord ; it is not possible to form any judgment but one on the events that have passed, and the consequence of that judgment must be, that all intercourse between us henceforward must cease.”

Mr. Mordaunt withdrew, and left Lord Villars and his sister to rail and to rejoice ; for after what Mr. Mordaunt had said, they neither of them entertained any apprehension but that Ellen would break her engagement with Henry.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XII.

- “ No idly-feign’d poetic pains,
“ Their sad love-lorn lamentings claim,
“ No shepherd’s pipe—Arcadian strains,
“ No fabled tortures, quaint and tame
“ The plighted faith, the mutual flame,
“ The oft’ attested pow’rs above,
“ These were the pledges of their love.”

BURNS.

HENRY had not been present at the conversation that had passed between his father and Mr. Mordaunt ; as soon as he had recovered from the emotion into which the last words of Ellen had thrown him, he had withdrawn to the Parsonage, there to pour out his griefs to the commiserating Mr. and Mrs. Thornton : they,

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while

while they endeavoured, by the softest arts of pity to administer some balm to his wounds, sought to inspire him with fortitude to support the consummation of his misfortune, which in the present circumstances they considered as inevitable.

Ellen passed the night in endeavouring to strengthen herself in the resolution, which she saw was the only one she could now adopt without incurring the reproaches of her own heart, and involving Henry in disobedience and ruin—But she dreaded his vehemence; and though she persuaded herself *that* alone would not be able to overpower her judgment, grounded as it was, upon the best reasoning she was able to command, yet she shrunk from the contest; and had she not had more compassion for him than for herself, she would have explained herself in writing, and spared them both the pangs of a fruitless altercation; but to comply with his wishes in every thing that militated not against his duty, she

she thought the most sacred of her own, and she kept the appointment made the preceding night.

The moment she cast her eyes upon him, she saw the trial that awaited her was of a different kind to the one for which she had been preparing herself. All animation was fled from his countenance, a settled despair had taken possession of his features, and as he approached her the tears fell in large drops from his eyes.

“ Dear Henry !” said she, holding out her hand to him—He took it, and pressed it closely to his lips.

“ So kind, and yet so determined !—I do not complain, Ellen ; but surely I ought not to have been condemned unheard.”

“ Unheard ! Am I not here for the purpose of listening to all that you have to say ?”

“ Yet my father tells me I have nothing to hope.”

“ Do not believe Lord Villars rather than me?—You have every thing to hope that in your unprejudiced reason you would wish to hope ; I think I may venture to promise you shall decide for me.”

“ Oh ! that I might, then should I never quit this dear hand until you had promised to pledge your faith with it at the altar.”

“ Would you then brave your father’s displeasure ? Would you be content to live in perpetual enmity with him ? Would you entail distress and poverty on your family ?”

“ Oh ! no, no :—my father would withdraw his objections—Justice, reason, would compel him to withdraw them. My family shall never receive injury from me. I have offered to divest myself of my birthright, to resume the station which Ellen’s love
might

might be allowed to blefs—I have been told I cannot divest myself of my title, and that that title must be supported by riches; that the fortune I may obtain by marriage must be such as will provide for my numerous brothers and sisters, whose necessary provision will otherwise reduce the family estate below the decorous appendage of a title. I am reminded that such have ever been the known family views, and that I acknowledged the force of them when I pleaded my being a second son, as an unanswerable reason why I might be allowed to choose for myself; however my heart or my understanding may revolt from such reasonings, I mean not to combat them; I mean to act as if convinced of their truth, and their rectitude; and had I not had reason to have believed the cause already prejudged, I had a proposal to have made to you, that I persuaded myself might have reconciled duty and inclination, have satisfied my father, and made us happy.”

Ellen's heart fluttered with revived hope.

"And what is your proposal? Be assured there is no prejudgment; only shew me how I can be yours, without violating the immutable obligation of obedience to a parent, and you will not be more ready to propose than I shall be to comply."

"My proposal," said he, still speaking faintly, "is grounded on the knowledge I believed I had of your heart, on its total freedom from any wish for splendor, for shew——"

"Name them not; reconcile my duty, and my love and your task is over."

"Dearest creature! how could I for a moment suspect that love? How could I for a moment believe it less pure than my own?"

"And did you? Could you?"

“ You are calumniated, my Ellen ; I have been taught to fear, that, awed by my father’ threats of everlasting displeasure, you shrunk from a marriage, which under that displeasure would be a source only of poverty and distress to you.”

“ How am I beset on all sides ! How allured by inclination, how stimulated by resentment to quit the rugged path of duty ! Support my rectitude, my dear Henry, by your own, and make me no proposal that is not warranted by the sanction of virtue.”

“ What I propose is this : that I shall pursue the line of life marked out for me before the unfortunate death of my brother ; that the annual difference there will be between the allowance my father will make me as an inmate of Lincoln’s-Inn, and that which I ought to have as his eldest son, shall accumulate, and be considered as a fund upon which I shall draw for your fortune ; that I shall not claim your hand but upon

the condition that it was first promised me. While my father lives the splendor of the family will be supported by him; when he dies, though it must suffer a temporary eclipse, it will be in no danger of being annihilated.—“No wonder,” said Henry, interrupting himself, “that you smile, I almost disdain to dwell upon such considerations; but if there is no preaching people into reason, it is well for the sake of self to accommodate ourselves as well as we can to their folly. As I have no hope that the savings I have proposed to be made from my annual allowance will be considered as satisfactory to the wants and the wishes of the family, I further propose that in the event of my coming to the estate, such a part of it shall be appropriated to the use of my brothers and sisters, as in some given number of years may make up the sum that my father has fixed in his own mind as a proper fortune to be brought into the family by his eldest son’s wife: at the end of this time I shall resume the whole of the

estate, and the name of Villars recover its lustre. Thus no injury will be done to the younger branches of the family, you, my Ellen, will after all be a fortune, the family splendor will be untarnished, and all this will be purchased on our part by a few years of obscurity and happiness."

Though Ellen had a rectitude of principle and understanding, that made her perfectly comprehend, and resolutely adhere to that plainest of nature's dictates, the obedience due to a parent, she was too young and too noble hearted to calculate the inconveniencies of a narrow income, or to have suffered them to have influenced her decision, if she had calculated them, while they could reach only herself and him, whom she doubted not, would have considered the possession of her hand as a full compensation: her heart beat quick at this proposal of Henry's, her eyes sparkled with pleasure.—"And what says your father to this plan?" cried she, trembling with the eagerness of hope.

"What

“ What says he ! What can he say ? Has he any right to object ? ”

“ But *does* he object ? ” said Ellen, with a voice scarcely articulate.

“ Dearest Ellen, will you hazard nothing for me ? When every claim of justice is satisfied, are we to be undone for a punctilio ? ”

“ Your father does *not* then approve your plan ? ”

“ But he will approve it, he will be compelled to approve it—all the world will unite in his condemnation if he does not.”

“ When he *does* approve, be assured of my most cheerful, my most delighted concurrence.”

“ And without that approbation you will do nothing for me ? ”

“ Alas !

“ Alas ! what *can* I do ? Had it been only justice that was to have been satisfied should we ever have been in any danger of being separated ? Will this plan of yours at all avert your father’s displeasure ? Will it save you from disobedience, or from the effects of it ? Will you not still have a parent’s enmity to deprecate ? And without the concurrence of Lord Villars how can your plan itself take place ? How can its beneficial effects be felt ? How can the claims of justice, which you seem yourself to allow, be satisfied ? ”

“ Time will do all for us ; my father will forgive when he sees that the consequences he so dreads have not followed the step he forbids ; we shall have injured no one, and happy in each other.— ”

“ Oh ! Henry, Henry ! how should we be happy ? There can be no happiness for a child in disobedience to a parent ; no sophistry, no hope of selfish joy can obscure
so

so evident a truth, can allure me to dare its violation—we have no choice if Lord Villars persists in his opposition, we must submit, and—”

Part—she would have said, but her tongue faltered, and she stopped.

“ Oh ! Ellen you have not the heart to utter the word ; and can you persist in the thing ? ”

“ Cruel necessity forces it upon us ; we cannot do otherways.”

“ Well, then, be it so,” said he, after a pause ; “ but let not the parting be for ever ; let us yield in appearance to the present storm ; let us preserve our hearts for each other, and refer our happiness to a time when no imagined duty, no real injustice, can step in between us.”

“ Dear

“ Dear Henry, do not so tempt me ; see you not the fallacy of this ? See you not that we should live a falsehood, and that the hypocrisy that affects the air of a difficult virtue, is in itself the worst vice ? ”

“ All your conclusions, Ellen, tend to one point ; would you then have me make obedience perfect ? Do you advise me to marry Lady Almeria ? ”

“ I am but a bad casuist,” cried the weeping but unrepenting Ellen ; “ but I do not see that the duty which requires you to give up your own choice to the will of the father, exacts that you should adopt his in opposition to your own.”

“ What then does he gain by the obedience you so unfeelingly enforce ? ”

“ At present the satisfaction that must result to a parent from even the partial compliance of a child with his wishes, and, in
future,

future, the more complete gratification of seeing your choice and his the same."

"And can you bear to point out such a futurity? Can you *desire* it?"

"Let us not," said Ellen, trembling, "let us not deceive ourselves; it is with this hope the present sacrifice is required; our renunciation of each other must be complete—it must be for *ever*."

"For *ever* be it then," said Henry, rushing towards the door, "for now I see that you desire it."

"Stay, dear Henry."

"Dear! do you say I am dear?"

"*Most* dear! do not inflict upon me the only trial to which I feel myself unequal: I can bear to give you up, but I cannot bear that you should believe me fickle or interested."

"Oh!

“ Oh ! would to God I could believe you so ; but while I think of you as you are, how shall I imitate you in the virtue that so exalts you in mine eyes ? ”

“ It is from sad necessity that I act ; you too must feel its irresistible power, and all the merit that either of us can have is in the manner in which we support that necessity. ”

“ I do not yet admit the necessity. If you refuse to resign the rights you have over me, my father must yield to them. ”

“ Let us not go over the same ground, ” said the almost exhausted Ellen ; “ nothing but Lord Villars’s consent to our marriage will ever justify me to myself in becoming your wife, or you in my eyes for accepting me as such. Lord Villars has declared, and who can doubt his firmness ? that his consent never shall be obtained ; the consequence is obvious—dear Henry, receive my last farewell ! ”

“ Never,

“ Never, never will I give you up—I will never relinquish you—nay, you must not, shall not leave me.”

“ I *must*, for wherefore should I stay ?”

“ Go then ; but be assured I shall haunt you wherever you go—my father shall gain nothing but my misery by his injustice—if I cannot be your’s, I will not be another’s.”

“ You will think better of it,” said Ellen, as she opened the door ; “ farewell.” She closed it, and, her task over, her powers forsook her, and she sunk into a chair motionless, and nearly without recollection. There was nobody to observe her, and she had time to return to herself. Suddenly she heard a movement in the room that she had quitted ; she arose hastily, and passing up a pair of back stairs, took refuge in her own chamber.

Henry

Henry, given up to his emotions, had remained where Ellen had left him ; the sudden entrance of Lord Villars roused him from his grief; he started at the sight of him, as at something noxious, and passing furiously by him, quitted the house on the instant.

Lord Villars required no other proof of the part that Ellen had taken, and exulting in the success of his schemes, sent a respectful message to her, desiring he might have the honour of returning his thanks in person. This was, however, a mark of complaisance that Ellen thought she might well be allowed to refuse him; she therefore excused herself by writing these words on a scrap of paper:—

“ As Lord Villars will learn from his son the submission that has been paid to his will, there is no doubt but he will willingly excuse himself the sight of a person whose presence must be a reproach to him. Ellen therefore

therefore begs leave to decline the honor of appearing before him."

Lord Villars, even in the midst of his triumph, could not help feeling the superiority both of Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen, and he withdrew from Groby Manor successful it is true, but mortified: and his pride severely hurt, that, though he had overcome by the force of his power, he had not been able to deceive by his duplicity.

CHAP. XIII.

—“ Cancel all our vows,
“ And when we meet at any time again,
“ Be it not seen in either of our brows,
“ That we one jot of former love retain.”

DRAYTON.

HENRY had found shelter at the Parsonage, and it required all Mr. Thornton's influence to bring his mind to any degree of moderation: Displeased, yet enraptured with Ellen; indignant against his father, yet feeling the principle of filial love and filial duty strong in his heart, his passions were wrought up to a pitch of intemperance

perance that allowed his reason no weight, and urged him to resolutions that could only perpetuate and justify his misery. Mr. Thornton at length succeeded in calming him; but he could not prevail with him to relinquish the idea of endeavouring to extort from Ellen a promise that she would preserve her heart for him, and wait in the hope that he might by some means induce his father to withdraw his objections. Mr. Thornton in vain represented that he had no reason to doubt Ellen's joyful acquiescence in any measure that tended to unite them, and which had Lord Villars's sanction; nor had he any thing to fear from the lightness of her mind, or the variableness of her inclination; but to seek any concession on her part at this time, and much more any promise, would be to make all the resolution she had hitherto shewn appear as a mean subterfuge, and would, in fact, in its effect, entirely destroy what she most intended to establish, his obedience to his father.

Henry

Henry felt as if there were still something to be done, and it was intolerable to him to sit down in inactive hopelessness. It was some relief to him to seek Ellen in the wood, though sure not to find her there: He acknowledged every evening that the pursuit was vain, yet went out every morning with revived expectation. He wrote, and his letter was returned; but again he wrote, because to write was to do something, and while he made the effort, he for so many moments suspended despair.

Ellen, not a whit less afflicted, though more patient than Henry, had indulged herself in one day's seclusion from her family: The happiness she had given up was too dear to her heart, not to demand from her a sincere tribute of grief to its memory. And indeed the agitation that her mind had undergone for the last twenty-four hours, made it necessary that in private she should calm and regulate her feelings. She saw, however, her father, and found in his ca-

resses and approbation the best reward for what she had done, and her best stimulative to perseverance.

On the morrow she appeared again in the breakfast-room, resumed her accustomed employments, and endeavoured, by something like cheerfulness to do her part towards dispelling the gloom which seemed to have settled over Groby Manor. By this conduct she rendered innoxious the unkindness of her mother—All her taunts and sarcasms rather lacerated her own than Ellen's heart, while Ellen appeared unconscious of her design to hurt her. She forbore to reproach others, and felt she could herself be no just object of reproach to any one. With the thoughts of the future she did not disturb herself—perhaps she believed that the image of Henry would never depart from her mind ; but she neither told herself that it would be so, nor encouraged the idea when it occurred. Having resolutely entered the path of duty, she was
resolved

resolved to tread it, lead where it would, and if, in the present depressed state of her mind, she formed a wish, it was to hear that Henry was equally reasonable with herself.

But however this temper of mind was the certain road to happiness in time to come, for the present she was more than sufficiently wretched to have gratified the wish of the most malignant: It was not possible to obliterate with a wish all remembrances of past delight, or promised felicity—it was not possible to forget that Henry had been alike the choice of her fancy and of her reason; that his love had been her best treasure; and that in relinquishing it she made him as wretched as she made herself—the thought indeed of his misery was often more than she could bear. The work was suspended, and the book dropped from her hand, when her too faithful memory represented his transports and his despair. His idea was, in fact, so closely united with every thing she did, or

1 2 thought,

thought, with every object around her, and with every occupation she attempted, that to forget him was impossible ; and she sometimes doubted if she should ever be able to remember him with less anguish than at the present moment.

It is true, he gave her very little time for making the experiment ; he was every day at Groby Manor, and though she constantly refused to see him, this did not make him forbear attempting to throw himself in her way, in all their formerly most frequented walks. He wrote to her continually ; his letters were unsealed, but she returned them unread ; again he wrote to her, and he employed her sisters to inform her, that he could not believe she did him the injustice to refuse to look into his letters.

Mr. Mordaunt frequently saw him, and as he was touched with the most sincere compassion for his sufferings, was willing

to

to tolerate this unreasonableness for some little time, hoping that such indulgence would lead him to resume more command over himself: But, in the mean time his heart bled for Ellen, on whom, in spite of her self-command and fortitude, this persecution had the most sensible effect.

At length Mr. Mordaunt found himself obliged to tell the unfortunate Henry, that he could no longer suffer him to haunt the environs of Groby Manor; and that, if he wished to preserve his friendship, he must quit Northumberland: Henry's spirit took this ill, and he declared that nothing but an order under Ellen's hand should induce him to quit the country.

Ellen's heart bled for his distress—she forgot her own.

“ I would see him once more,” said she, “ whatever it might cost me ; but in seeing him what relief shall I afford him ? He

knows my heart; he knows how I suffer with him; if we meet we shall enfeeble each other."

Mr. Mordaunt encouraged her to write to him. This was not an easy task, but she hoped some good might arise from her letter, and she resolved to write—After many less successful efforts, as she thought, she sent him the following :—

" It is a cruel persecution that you subject me to, my dear cousin; why do you force me to appear severe and unkind, when I aim only at being just and true? The relief that you require from me I have it not in my power to grant; but in the example of obedience that I seek to set you, I offer you all the consolation that our unhappy circumstances allow: Assure yourself I have not read your letters: How harsh it sounds to say, that while affairs remain as they now are I never will—This is the last of my writing that I can address to you. Of all

all the power that once we might be supposed to have over each other, that which good-will and friendship give alone remains. If you would not have me believe that with you I have forfeited even *this*, you will endeavour to make that task *easy* which I *must* perform, however *difficult*. I entreat you to leave Northumberland, and if we are ever to meet again, let it be without self-reproach on either side."

* "Adieu, and every blessing be your's that attends on virtue ; if there were a happiness apart from rectitude, such is the honesty of my affection, that I could not wish it you."

After all, this was a bad letter—but Ellen was not in circumstances to write a good one. It was received by Henry with tears of delight and anguish. To see Ellen's hand-writing addressed to him, filled his mind with joy ; but there were some touches in the letter, and more especially the pur-

port of the whole, that stung him almost to madness.—He observed that she no longer called him her dear Henry, but her dear cousin, as if the affection she bore him was no longer appropriate to himself, but belonged only to the relation he held towards her. The relinquishing for ever all power over him but what arose from friendship and good-will, shewed him that she did not wish to owe even his compliance with her request, to any more ardent or particular feeling; her earnestness that if ever they met again, they should meet without self-reproach, convinced him of her adherence to her principle, that their present separation ought to be considered as the termination of their engagement, and that if they were again to meet it must be only as friends. The intimation that she wished him no happiness independent of rectitude, he thought pointed out a desire that he should fully comply with his father's wishes. All these observations filled him with the most poignant grief, and the last

(in

(in which, however, he was mistaken) with the most lively resentment. Nothing he now found was to be hoped for from a longer continuance in Northumberland, and he therefore determined to be gone.

He committed to Mrs. Thornton a few lines, which as he assured her they were his last farewell, she did not scruple to receive, and to engage that Ellen should read.— Thus he wrote :—

“ I go.—You request it, and I comply. But it is not the cool principle of friendship that gives such absolute power over the mind ; it is not a sense of your *good-will* that throws me a vagabond on the world, without an object, without a motive for action, and delivers me up to all its dangers, robbed of the polar star, Hope, to direct my course. You have withdrawn your beneficial influence, but it is not in your power to withdraw that which may impel me—perhaps to my ruin. They tell me

you act nobly—it may be so, for you *were* all excellence; but my faculties are too much clouded to distinguish between right and wrong, and I can feel only your unkindness. Heaven shield *you* from self-reproach, but for *myself*!——”

“ Adieu, adieu, my beloved, my *own* Ellen, appropriated to me by vows, by love! —No, I will not throw you back into the common herd of relations, you who have so long been worn near my inmost soul, the dearest treasure I possessed.—Adieu, and may you soon forget your cousin.”

CHAP. XIV.

“ Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THIS letter was the severest stroke Ellen had received.—Its incoherence, the despair it manifested, gave her an image of Henry's mind that filled her with horror—it made her call in question the rectitude of all that she had done—she felt herself accountable for any excess that Henry might commit; and she knew not that she was exculpated by *any* motive from the guilt of having broken an engagement which had always acted like a charm upon Henry, and preserved him hitherto in the paths of

virtue and prudence. While she believed herself right, whatever she suffered in being so, she retained a source of comfort in her own breast that calmed her most tumultuous passions, and lulled her loudest griefs; but the supposition that she was *wrong* destroyed this calm, and gave her up to the most unmitigated affliction.

She was at one moment inclined to annul all that she had done, to declare her adherence to her engagements with Henry, and her design to wait till Lord Villars either withdrew his objections, or was no longer able to enforce them: But the conviction that she was influenced to such designs rather by the complainings of Henry than by any reasonings of her own, made her first hesitate as to the rectitude of such a step, and then abandon the idea altogether. Sometimes she thought to write to Henry, openly to acknowledge all she suffered, and unequivocally to declare that her regards towards him were the same as ever; but she

she considered that this was, in fact, to tell him only that, of which he could not doubt, and that, as it could not be followed by any yielding of resolution on her part, it would only serve to revive a hope that must again be lost in still bitterer disappointment ; she considered farther, that as she had declared her renunciation of him to be final, whatever affection she might in such early days of their separation still be allowed to entertain for him, yet that it ought by every passing hour to become less and less, and that therefore she was bound to avoid any professions that might seem to promise a continuance of this love, or which might encourage him to keep alive in his breast a passion she had exhorted him to sacrifice.

On the whole she was convinced that her “ strength was to sit still ;” that she had nothing farther to do but to bear her own burthen with all the patience she could, and by obtruding herself as little as possible on the memory of Henry, to accelerate that

5 period,

period, when she would be able to look back on the present painful transactions as on the impressions made by a painful dream.

This was what the plain sense and the true virtue of Ellen suggested to her, as the best line of conduct she could pursue; and in pursuing it she hoped in time to reap the reward she so well deserved, peace of mind to herself: But such quiet forbearance, when exertion would have been so flattering to the feelings of her heart, was not without efforts so painful, that in the struggle the colour forsook her cheek, she lost her appetite and rest, and in spite of all her attempts to the contrary, Ellen was but the ghost of what she had once been.

In quitting Northumberland, Henry knew not where to go—to go to his father he felt was impossible; he had no motive for returning to his chambers, and neither duty nor inclination called him elsewhere; he was indeed the very vagabond he had described himself

himself to Ellen, and he felt careless as to what he did, or what became of him.

From this dreadful dereliction of himself the policy, though not the kindness of his father relieved him.

Lord Villars had carefully watched him from the time that he had himself quitted Groby Manor; and he was hence convinced, that from the present state of Henry's mind, nothing favorable to his future hopes was now to be attempted; he saw it was necessary to regain his influence over him by kindness, and to refer to some distant time the completion of those views that he by no means gave up; he was, however, aware that even tenderness from him at this time would be suspected, and he therefore employed Lady Villars to sooth the passions of her son, and to soften his resentment.

Lady Villars was a person of a good heart, but of very little understanding;
she

she had always been accustomed to the most perfect submission to the will of her husband ; by him she had been taught the impossibility of allowing their eldest son to connect himself with a woman of no fortune, and the consequent ruin of their family if he did so ; this idea was by habit become so strong, that she could as easily have changed her nature as have abandoned it ; she therefore looked upon the separation of Ellen and Henry as unavoidable ; but she did not therefore look upon it with less pity, and she thought that every thing ought to be done that could make their sacrifice easy to them : that in time they would each be happy asunder she had no doubt, but she wished time to be given them. Lord Villars, from less kind motives, was of the same opinion ; — he engaged Lady Villars to write to her son, assuring him of the tender concern that both she and his father took in his happiness, praising him for the compliance he had shewn to their wishes, and promising him that

that no other woman should be offered to his acceptance, till the remembrance of past connexions were obliterated. From herself she invited him to join her instantly at the Park, from whence his father was absent, expressing an anxious desire to see him, and assuring him he should see nobody there that he did not wish to see: This conclusion was meant to point to Lady Almeria, and it was so understood by Henry.

On the receipt of this letter, he felt himself irresistibly drawn towards his mother—her tenderness he had always experienced, and it was peculiarly tempting at this instant, when he felt abandoned by the whole world; he hoped too, from the facility of her understanding, to be able to persuade her of the injustice there was in his giving up Ellen; and he knew, from the purity of her principles, that what she believed to be unjust she would never think eligible.

He

He repaired therefore immediately to the Park, and found, from the tenderness of Lady Villars, all the consolation that he had hoped ; but he was disappointed in his expectation of drawing her over to his side. Of the justice or injustice of the matter, she declared herself incompetent to judge ; but she knew it was impossible he should marry a woman without fortune, and what it was impossible to avoid, however grievous, it was necessary to endure.

Thus, from the shortness of capacity in his mother, and the obdurate ambition of his father, Henry found he must give up all hopes of redress to his wrongs, or relief from his miseries.

Lord Villars had conducted Lady Almeria to an estate she had in Devonshire, and had left her under the care of an aunt, who was left joint guardian with himself. He had left her with an assurance that a few months would obliterate all traces of
Ellen

Ellen from the breast of Henry, and that twelve months would not pass before they saw the full completion of her wishes. He expected, by thus keeping up her hopes, that he could preserve her constancy, and that, though the period might be stretched much beyond that he predicted, she would be in no haste to form any other connexion ; to lessen the danger of her doing so, he recommended to her aunt, that she should pass the coming winter in Devonshire, and he engaged that Lady Villars, himself, and son, should visit her there.

Having thus provided as much as circumstances admitted, for the security of his prize, he purposely moved from place to place, avoiding the meeting with his son till he learned from Lady Villars, that though he seemed to have sunk into a deep melancholy, his resentment appeared to have subsided, and that she thought they might now meet with advantage to both sides.

Lord

Lord Villars, on this intimation, went immediately to the Park, and by the most winning address, and the kindest manners, strove to regain the confidence, and awaken the dormant affection of his son. He spoke to him of Ellen, and always in the most flattering terms; scarcely seemed less hurt than Henry that so much merit should be lost to them, and deplored the necessity (upon the strength of which he always took care to dwell) that separated them; of any farther choice he gave no hint, saving that he sometimes said, that with the single qualification of fortune provided for, the whole female sex lay before him.

*To the kindness of a parent, however suspicious, Henry could not be long insensible. He felt it as a balm to his wounds, and was sometimes so far seduced by it, as to hope that in time his father might relent; he wished therefore for every reason to preserve the good understanding between them, and Ellen had soon the consolation of hearing that

that they appeared upon the best terms together ; the inference indeed that it was natural to draw from such information, would not perhaps have been very consoling to any mind less true and disinterested than Ellen's ;—but in having given up Henry to a sense of duty, she had made no reservation whatever ; she meant wholly and for ever to give him up ; and in this circumstance she found no comfort so soothing to her heart, as to know that he began to recover his peace of mind, and to resume the path of duty and obedience ; it would lead him ultimately, she doubted not, to marriage with some woman of his father's choice ; and she offered up no other prayer, when this idea occurred, but that she might also be so much the the choice of Henry as to secure his happiness.

It was not indeed before she wanted it that this comfort reached her. The impression his letter had made upon her feelings she had found it impossible to efface ;
her

her mind was equal to any exertion, but her constitution sunk under that which she made to appear easy and cheerful, while her heart was torn by the most excruciating fears for the happiness and good conduct of Henry.

Mr. Mordaunt saw, with the extreme anxiety, her increasing thinness, her loss of colour, and a kind of feebleness that seemed creeping over all her faculties; and he felt, with something like disappointment, that he thought he saw even Ellen unequal to the task of rising superior to an unfortunately placed passion. Ellen had felt that there was so much to condemn in Henry's letter, that she had carefully concealed its contents from every creature. Mr. Mordaunt knew not therefore the real spring from whence her bitterest sorrow flowed, and imputing her sorrows wholly to disappointed love, he saw, with surprise, an improvement take place both in her looks and spirits, from the moment she knew

knew that Henry was living in his father's house, and that they were friends together.

He ventured distantly to try her on this subject, and to probe her feelings, to see how far she could endure Henry's marriage with another :—She understood him, and replied with the most perfect openness—

“ My heart is lightened of its only intolerable weight, now I am assured that Henry is in the road of duty—All the sorrows that belong to myself I know I can bear, and, in time, subdue. I look for Henry's marriage ! I acknowledge that my anxiety on the subject will be great ; but when I released him from his engagements with me, it was for the express purpose of his forming new ones with another.”

Mr. Mordaunt could only clasp Ellen to his heart and call her what he thought her, the most rational of her sex.

From

From this time Mr. Mordaunt saw a visible improvement take place daily in Ellen : But to suppose that a perfect cure could be wrought while she continued at Groby Manor, where every object reminded her of Henry, seemed as unreasonable as to expect that ease should be restored to a person while still bound to the rack. Mr. Mordaunt felt that she called for every assistance possible for her to receive, and however inconvenient it might be with regard to pecuniary considerations, he determined, with his family, to spend part of the ensuing winter at Bath.

Ellen received the proposal with the gratitude it called for—She knew the reluctance that she felt to quit Groby Manor, was an unfavourable symptom, and she hoped change of place might indeed contribute towards making her more the person she wished to be, than she felt she was at present.

Henry

Henry in the meanwhile remained at the Park, a prey to the most tormenting disquietude ; not able to resign his wishes, and every day seeing less and less reason to hope their gratifications.

Lord Villars observed that on the part of Henry there appeared nothing like a return to cheerfulness, and he began to suspect, that so far from intending to get the better of his passion for Ellen, he secretly nourished it ; and that having resolved to keep himself free from every other engagement, he looked forward to the time when his father's death would set him at liberty to follow his own inclination. The no-marriage of Henry was nearly as detrimental to Lord Villars's family views, as his marriage with a woman of no fortune, and he dreaded seeing his son confirmed in sentiments that he knew it would be beyond and stretch of his power to overthrow. He had, indeed, guessed pretty nearly the state of Henry's mind ; something, much resembling

sembling the above plan, was forming itself strongly into a resolution, except that not daring to date his happiness from his father's death, he had substituted in idea the vague term of some distant period, though well his reason assured him, that no period, however distant, during his father's life, could unite him, with his consent, to Ellen. Having in some measure fixed his own plan, the thought that most tormented him, arose from the apprehension that Ellen might be induced to connect herself with another. It was this fear that had made him so strenuous to draw from her a promise, that she would preserve her heart for him; her refusal had nearly distracted him, and the dread that her yielding might make all his constancy vain, still continued to overwhelm his mind with the deepest gloom.

Lord Villars knew, that though by his power he had separated Henry and Ellen, he could proceed no farther: To oblige
Henry

Henry to take another wife, was what he could not do ; and he now saw that it was only from the change time might make in the inclinations of Henry, that he could hope the complete success of his designs. To keep him in the country, brooding over his disappointment, and indulging in romantic plans of everlasting constancy, was not the way to accelerate this change, he therefore caught eagerly at a wish, slightly expressed by Henry, that he might be allowed to go for some time to his chambers in town—to town therefore he went, and Lord Villars employed every art to draw him from the gloom of Lincoln's-Inn to the haunts of gaiety and amusement. He had the satisfaction to hear, that his schemes were not wholly unsuccessful.

After some time spent sullenly alone, Henry began to regain his cheerfulness, to associate with the young and the dissipated, and to be once again the delight of his companions ; he now stood on a precipice,

pice, and in the wreck of his love and happiness, his principles and his virtue were well nigh involved.

But to the mischiefs to which the mercenary views of a parent exposed him, he was preserved by his passion for a virtuous woman, from whom that parent wished to sever him for ever. The misery of his mind when alone drove him into company; nor was it the still voice of rational converse, or the quiet complacency of domestic scenes that could overcome the louder note of grief that spoke within, or controul the contending passions that were boiling in his breast: Passion must be opposed to passion, the festive roar of laughter, the dissonant bray of Bacchus, were alone sufficiently powerful to overcome the sense he retained of his disappointment; no wonder if, in such company, with a mind so disordered, his

“Pulse’s maddening play,
“Wild, sent him Pleasure’s devious way,
“Misted by Fancy’s meteor ray,
“By passion driv’n.”——

Who

Who does not tremble for Henry? One step beyond where now he stood, and he had fallen, not to rise again, but through the rugged paths of penitence and remorse.

But the words in Ellen's letter, "if ever we meet again, let us meet free from self-reproach," had never departed from his memory—To meet again, to meet again as allowably dear to each other, as they had once been, was a hope so interwoven with his very existence, that he felt life and it must expire together; but to meet her unworthy of her, was a misery beyond any he had yet known; to lose her by his own fault he knew would be distraction, and starting from the idea with horror, he resolved to quit a life where every moment teemed with temptations which he could not yield to without entailing on himself the severest self-reproach.

However resolute he might be to avoid vice, he yet found that dissipation of some

kind was necessary to a mind, so cruelly thwarted in its favorite views as his was, and all its plans for the happiness of every following hour thus deranged.

He determined to seek this dissipation abroad, where even from amusement he might draw instruction, and where, while he diverted his melancholy, he might cultivate his understanding.

He applied to Lord Villars for permission to leave England, and received a ready compliance with his wishes. Lord Villars, however, earnestly desired to see him first, and Henry hastened down into Hampshire. Lord Villars had artfully sent off Lady Villars into Devonshire before his arrival, and when Henry asked for his mother, he was told where she was, and that she was so much indisposed that she could not travel into Hampshire to see him, and still less could she suffer him to quit England without bidding him adieu.

Henry

Henry saw the trap, but firm in his own constancy, he did not fear any consequence that could be drawn from his visiting a sick parent in Lady Almeria's house ; he therefore readily accompanied his father into Devonshire, and when there, he sought, by a studied coldness towards Lady Almeria, to evince to every body that it was only a parent that he did visit.

Lady Almeria was, however, young and handsome, and she shewed him so flattering a preference, that Henry, who was no anchoret, found it impossible to maintain his reserve.

Lady Almeria was a little giddy-brain, who either felt or cared for no consequence, let her say or do what she would ; she laughed and romped with Henry, rallied his grave airs, talked of her own passion, boasted the constancy with which she would wait his return, and seemed so sure of her passion being answered, that it was

impossible to tell her that she was mistaken : Henry was amused, and perhaps flattered by all this, but his heart was only the more immoveably attached to Ellen; for who could have thought of exchanging her for Lady Almeria? His spirits received great improvement from his sojourn in Devonshire; but he quitted England without having wavered for a moment in his resolution of having no other wife but Ellen.

Lord Villars saw enough, during Henry's visit into Devonshire, to raise his hopes; but he also saw that while Henry remained unmarried, they probably would never be fulfilled; her marriage therefore became a point with him, and he employed his sister to bring this about if possible.

Ellen soon learned, from her mother, the visit Henry had made in Devonshire, and she learned it under all the exaggerated form that malicious representation can give. In the pain that Ellen felt at this information,

mation, she acknowledged the little progress that she had made in driving Henry from her heart, but even here her pain was not wholly selfish: in the character of Lady Almeria she saw nothing that could make Henry happy, and again she felt accountable for his loss of happiness, as she had before done for his probable loss of rectitude.

CHAP. XV.

“ I suppose him virtuous,
“ In voices well divulged, free, learn'd, and valiant ;
“ And in dimension, and the shape of nature,
“ A gracious person.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE whole Mordaunt family had now been some months at Bath ; Ellen had imposed upon herself to partake of all the amusements of the place ; she therefore refused no amusement that was offered her. The mornings were spent at breakfasts, and the evenings in balls. But a way of life so little suited either to her present inclinations, or to her habits, exhausted both her mind and body, and she was often compelled,
from

from weariness and indisposition, to remain at home.

At home indeed she never failed of passing the hours extremely to her satisfaction.— Her mother and sisters were constantly engaged, and her father as constantly at leisure, but he was seldom alone; and his society, and that of his friends, was much more suited to Ellen's disposition than any that, in the present state of her heart and spirits, she met with in public.

Sir William Ackland was amongst the most constant of her father's visitors, and it soon became evident that he was not the less so from his being now, from her increased indisposition, almost sure to meet Ellen in her father's drawing-room.

Sir William Ackland was one-and-forty, but he united to an uncommonly elegant and youthful looking person, the polished manners of a man who had lived much in

the world ; he had passed many years of his life abroad, was a man of sense and observation, and particularly excelled in the art of conversation ; when silent there was something austere in his countenance and manner ; but when he spoke the gloom dispersed, and he appeared all gaiety and good humour. His fortune was ample, and it was understood amongst his acquaintance that he was resolved to settle in England and marry.

It was apparent from Sir William's first knowledge of Ellen, that he watched her attentively ; but he seemed rather to study her character, than to be in love with her person. Ellen saw, in Sir William Ackland, nothing but an agreeable friend of her father's ; his conversation pleased her, and unconscious of his designs, and without any herself, she conversed with him with a freedom and unreserve which soon displayed the stores of her understanding, and the goodness of her heart.

This

This freedom was not checked on the part of Sir William, by any attentions that could obtrude the idea of a lover upon her fancy; she saw him every day the same, polite, obliging, and friendly; but though Henry, Ellen's prototype of love, was all these, he was so much more, that it was impossible that Ellen should believe effects so different should spring from the same cause; it never once occurred to her that Sir William sought her for a wife; and had she been consulted on the subject, she would have thought her eldest sister more suited to the station.

But this was not the opinion either of Sir William or of Mr. Mordaunt. The latter thought he saw, in an union with Sir William Ackland, an asylum for Ellen from all the ill-humour of her mother; in the opulence of Sir William's fortune, he believed was secured to Ellen a never-failing source of the indulgence of her benevolence, and he thought her situation, as his wife,

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would

would call into action all the powers of her understanding, and all the virtues of her heart. All the enquiries he could make into the character of Sir William were answered favorably; and though, through his long absence from England, he was not intimately known to any body, he was universally spoken of as a man of a liberal mind, integrity, and virtuous dispositions; it soon therefore became the favourite wish of Mr. Mordaunt to see Ellen united with Sir William Ackland; but as he was aware the more time elapsed before the proposal was made, the more likely it was to succeed, all the efforts that he made were rather to retard than to bring it on.

Ellen had, however, an open and professed lover. He also was a Baronet, a stout hale man of fifty, who, with a good constitution, and two thousand pounds a year, declared he wanted nothing but a young wife, and an heir to his estate. Ellen laughed both at his wants and his wishes; nor did she

she conceive it possible that any body should treat his pretensions more seriously.

But if Mr. Mordaunt desired Sir William Ackland for his son-in-law, Mrs. Mordaunt had not less earnestly fixed her mind upon Sir John Sinclair. By marrying Ellen to him, she would fulfil the task Lord Villars had given her to perform, and by giving such an husband to Ellen, she would gratify the never-ceasing dislike she entertained towards her. For a girl, with fifteen hundred pounds to her fortune, to refuse such an establishment, appeared to her madness, and poor Ellen was obliged to be very serious in a matter that appeared ridiculous to her.

Her steady refusal of such honors drew upon her, from her mother, so much reproach and obloquy, as made her life completely wretched. Sir William Ackland carefully observed all the family proceedings in this matter, and he was not more

6 pleased

pleased to remark that pecuniary advantage alone would not dispose of Ellen, than he was with the mildness with which she endured all the ill-treatment her opposition to her mother's unreasonable desires occasioned her. He wished, indeed, to see how she would conduct herself to a younger lover, for there was something in the ridicule with which, while the affair continued a laughing matter in the family, she had treated the notion of Sir John Sinclair's thinking himself a suitable husband for her, that had pressed rather unpleasantly upon some of Sir William's feelings; nor were his wishes long ungratified.

Amongst the numerous partners whom the fortune of the dance had consigned to Ellen, there was one young man, who being just come to his estate, and master of himself, imagined that the first woman he liked to flirt with, was the one with whom he could be happy for life; he made love with the same ease he would have made tea, and received Ellen's refusal with the same

same non-chalance as he had made his proposal. As he wanted neither sense nor money, was handsome, and full as well bred as most of the young men of the age, there was no very ostensible reason for the peremptoriness of Ellen's negative.

It had been sufficient with her that he did not raise one emotion of any kind in her mind, and that marriage was the thing least in her thoughts, and her wishes; but the talkers around her sought for some simple cause, to account for a young woman of small fortune, refusing to settle herself advantageously in the world; with many it was imputed to her design of becoming Lady Sinclair, but Sir William knew this was not the case;—others averred that she had fixed her hopes and designs upon Sir William himself, and this Sir William felt not at all disposed to question; he was complimented by so many upon his conquest, that he began to persuade himself (what cannot love and vanity persuade a man to?) that
if

if she refused the rich and the young, it was because his merit had penetrated her heart. The complaisance and attention with which she always listened to him, and the superiority that his personal attractions and outward manners gave him over all the other men who approached her, made this no very extraordinary or unpardonable mistake : On this mistake he grounded his resolution of of explaining himself to Mr. Mordaunt.

The spring was now far advanced, and the family were to quit Bath in less than a fortnight ; Sir William therefore wished, before he lost sight of them, to leave no doubt of his future intentions. He accordingly opened his heart to Mr. Mordaunt ; but he represented to him that being only a few weeks returned to England, he had much business to adjust before he could enter into matrimony : he therefore purposed to arrange his affairs, to visit his country residence, and afterwards, if Mr. Mordaunt encouraged him to hope, he flattered himself
he

he might be allowed to pay his devoirs to Ellen in Northumberland.

Mr. Mordaunt received Sir William's declaration with manifest pleasure, and with the frankness that distinguished his character, immediately informed him of the attachment that had subsisted between Ellen and Henry; he represented the case exactly as it was, and assured Sir William, that he had no doubt but that Ellen's mind grew every day more free from every remains of predilection in her cousin's favor; but he gave it as his opinion, that as Sir William must of necessity be some weeks before he could openly declare himself, it might be productive of good effects if he deferred his intended visit into Northumberland 'till the autumn; in the mean time Mr. Mordaunt promised to observe the inclinations of his daughter, and to deal with perfect fairness in the representations he should make of them, from time to time, to Sir William.

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt, who could not conceive that a man, who had passed his fortieth year, could expect a young woman, not yet twenty, to have fallen in love with him, or that it was probable that she should not have had some attachment or prepossession more suited to her years, had no suspicion that by the frankness of his dealing he pierced Sir William's heart with the most sensible disappointment, and opened it in future to all the tortures of rage and jealousy.

This prior love of Ellen's explained, in a way not at all flattering to Sir William's vanity, her indifference to the riches of Sir John Sinclair, and the youth of Mr. Bowden, and if he were to hope it were to be overcome in his favor, he found he was to owe his better fortune rather to time, and perhaps to the recommendation of a parent, interested in his behalf, than to his own merit.

The chagrin that he felt on this discovery made him readily come into Mr. Mordaunt's

daunt's propofal, that any farther declaration should be delayed, and he defigned to quit Bath without again feeing Ellen; accident, however, prevented this. Going to vifit Mr. Mordaunt one evening, when he had underftood that ſhe was to be at the ball, he found her in the drawing-room, and ſhe appeared, from the accidental mode of her drefs, or from ſome other cauſe, more attractive in her manner and appearance, than he had ever before thought her.

“ I feared,” ſaid he, the moment he ſaw her, “ that you were to have been at the ball.”

“ Then I am not to flatter myſelf,” ſaid ſhe gaily, “ that this viſit is to me ?”

“ Should you think it flattering if it were ſo ?”

“ I am not ſure I ſhould call it flattering ; but I am ſure I ſhould call it very pleaſant.”

There

There was a naïveté and truth in these words, that went to Sir William's heart.

“If I am not to be the first man that she has loved,” said he to himself, “I may be the second; and if from this moment I might be the only one, I should be happy.”

In this night's conversation Mr. Mordaunt was wholly forgotten, and Sir William's attentions and admiration were so apparent, that Ellen could not help seeing him in a light he had never appeared to her in before. When he was gone, Mr. Mordaunt ventured to rally Ellen on her conquest, and she replied with so much praise of Sir William, that Mr. Mordaunt thought himself in possession of his wishes.

The effect this evening had upon Sir William was such, that instead of leaving Bath at the time he designed, he continued there till the last moment of Mr. Mordaunt's stay, and spent so many hours in his house,

house, and with Ellen, that she could not doubt, but that, at least for the present, she had found the way to his heart. This was a discovery that certainly gave her no pleasure; but neither did it excite much pain, or give her any very lively alarm: There was something so guarded even in the admiration that Sir William expressed, as easily persuaded Ellen, who had no vanity to counteract her wishes, that he thought not of her as a wife, and that when once out of sight she should be thought of no more. It was, however, with great satisfaction, that she saw herself removed from Bath, and the sight of Groby Manor made her heart throb with delight. "Here," said she to herself, "I shall find an asylum from all gallantry; in those shades there will be no concert but the concert of the birds, no dancing but the quivering of the leaves."

She flew to the parsonage.—"My friends," said she, as she embraced first one and then the other, "I have not known so happy a moment as this since we parted." Her

Her return to Groby Manor seemed to give her new life, and, unknown to herself, the escape she thought she had had from Sir William Ackland diffused peace and cheerfulness over her mind.

She resumed all her occupations with a spirit that she had not experienced since her loss of Henry; and Mr. Mordaunt thought himself authorized in giving Sir William the most flattering accounts of her dispositions.

Ellen had, however, one continual cause for unhappiness, which neither her reason nor her patience could preserve her from feeling—this was the increased ill-humour of her mother. Baffled in her scheme of marrying her, persuaded that Ellen in secret meant to preserve herself for Henry, her resentment and malice towards her knew no bounds; there was no one moment of the day when she did not make her feel the fangs of her malevolence; all Mr. Mordaunt's authority could not shield Ellen from

from the storm ; the tongue is an instrument of evil that cannot be restrained : bitter taunts, and severe reproaches may be refented, but cannot, when we are compelled to live with the tormentor, be avoided. Ellen's duplicity and presumption were the continual topics of her mother's discourse, and with these she took care to mingle the most confident assurances that all would prove vain, and that Henry would return to England only to marry Lady Almeria.

From such attacks Ellen took refuge whenever she could at the parsonage ; but they made Mr. Mordaunt more and more impatient to see her under the protection of a man of worth, and to have her prove, by her marriage, the falseness of Mrs. Mordaunt's calumnies.

Sir William grew impatient to visit Northumberland, and Mr. Mordaunt determined to delay his consent no longer than till he had opened the matter fully to Ellen.

CHAP. XVI.

“ My once dear love ! hopeless that I no more
“ Must call thee so—the rich affection’s store
“ That fed on hopes, lies now exhaust and spent,
“ Like sums of treasure unto bankrupts lent :
“ We that did nothing study, but the way
“ To love each other, with which thoughts the day
“ Rose with delight to us, and with them set,
“ Must learn the hateful art how to forget.
“ Yet
“ Witness the chaste desires that never broke
“ Into unruly heats,
“ ’Tis no default in thee, I dare acquit
“ Thy maiden faith, thy purpose fair and white
“ As thy pure self.”

KING.

ONE day, when Mrs. Mordaunt had been more than commonly injurious, Ellen had withdrawn herself to her favorite wood, and had just eased her swelling heart by

by a flood of tears, when her father, who had purposely followed her from the house, joined her—she would have concealed her emotion.

“ My dear Ellen,” said he, “ your mother deserves no delicacy from you ; do not, for her sake, deprive me of your full confidence ; the sympathy of one parent is but a due compensation for the cruelty of another.”

“ Your kindness, my father,” said the weeping Ellen, “ is a compensation for every evil, and I ought to bear injuries that I have not deserved, with more fortitude.”

“ I ought to remove you from the pressure of such injuries, and I would do so to, even at the hazard of never seeing my wife again, did I not hope a more amicable end to all your oppressions, and such a one as will give the lie direct to all your mother’s unjust imputations.”

L 2

Ellen

Ellen regarded her father with a look of timid surprise.

“What do you mean, Sir?”

“Your marriage with a man of worth will secure your own happiness, and prove, beyond all dispute, the sincerity and good faith of that renunciation, the motives for which are now so daily called in question.”

“My marriage!” repeated Ellen faintly.

“I want no further proof,” cried Mr. Mordaunt warmly, “of the strength of your mind, and the purity of your principles: I know that the sacrifice you appeared to make was sincere; that you never looked to futurity for an indemnification for present losses; and I see, with equal pleasure and admiration that you are capable of receiving happiness from another source than that which is dried up to you for ever. It is not, my love, that I am putting your honesty

honesty to the test, but it is that I think I am offering a reward to your virtues, when I talk to you of other connexions, when I name marriage."

"Marriage!" again repeated Ellen.

"Were your home as happy as I could wish to make it, yet marriage would be desirable. Half the female virtues fade, or are useless, except in marriage. You are formed to adorn them all, and having suffered as a daughter, it is proper you should be rewarded as a wife."

"As a wife!" said Ellen.

"As a wife, my love; nor can I believe that with a man whom you could love there is any thing very dreadful in the name of wife. Sir William Ackland seeks and deserves your love; in giving you to him I believe I secure your happiness, and have I not observed that he is not disagreeable to you?"

“ Disagreeable ! no, certainly.”

“ His person, his conversation pleases you ; you think him worthy, amiable.”

“ Yes.”

“ You are not unconscious that he admires you ?”

“ No.”

“ It would not be ungrateful to you that he should love you ?”

Ellen was silent.

“ Dear Ellen, why these monosyllables ? Why this silence ?”

Ellen gasped for breath ; Mr. Mordaunt took her hand—it was cold.

“ You are ill ?”

“ No,

“ No, I am better ;” and throwing herself into her father’s arms, she burst into tears. “ Dear Sir, forgive me, I will not be less all you wish me, notwithstanding these foolish tears.”

“ They are not tears of reluctance, Ellen. I mean not to distress you ; you are and shall be mistress of yourself.”

“ It must come to this. I knew it would come to this ! I will not abuse your indulgence. But leave me, dear Sir, leave me : in two hours I will tell you what I think I can do, what I believe I ought to do.”

“ I *will* leave you, my love ; but do nothing merely because you think I wish it ; let the reasons why I wish it have their weight, but not the wish itself.”

“ Impossible ! your wish must be a motive with me.”

Mr. Mordaunt retired, and Ellen hastened, as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her to the parsonage. She found the little family assembled in that woodbine bower where so many happy hours of her childhood had been passed, where she had so often studied and so often idled with Henry, where she had a hundred times received his vows of everlasting love, and where she had as often promised never to forsake him. The recollection was too painful; she stopped short, her limbs failed her, Mr. Thornton caught her in his arms, and then giving her a glass of water, she rested her head on Mrs. Thornton's shoulder, and was saved by tears from fainting. Mr. and Mrs. Thornton hung over her with true parental affection, terrified with an emotion that they had never witnessed in her before, yet afraid to increase her distress by inquiring into the cause.

Mary, as much alarmed, and less considerate, cried, "Dear, dear Ellen, what is the

the matter? Who now has done you wrong?"

"No one; myself I think; I did not think I should have been so overcome; I meant to have been quite calm."

"But what, what is the matter?"

"Oh! my friends, you must advise me; yet, already I know what I ought to do."

"Sir William Ackland would marry you?" interrupted Mary.

"My poor Ellen!" said Mrs. Thornton.

"My dear Sir! my second father!" said Ellen, looking up to Mr. Thornton, "you shall be my casuist; you shall decide for me; what you determine will be right and good,"

"Dear Ellen! you have decided yourself. What is eligible, what tends to your
L 5 happiness,

happiness, nobody can doubt. The question is, what can you do?"

"I *can* do that which you advise me to do."

"Sir William is pleasant to your fancy, and approved of by your understanding; he is amiable, he is kind; plain sense requires no other qualifications in the object of affection."

"But if the heart is not free?" said Mary.

"Will Ellen make that plea?" said Mr. Thornton.

"No; if my heart is not yet Sir William Ackland's, I mean not to reserve it for another."

"What is the heart but the power of bestowing the affections where there is merit enough to deserve them? Does not Sir William

William Ackland possess that merit? And where can you look for married happiness with better hopes of success than with him?"

"No where, I believe."

"You are above the romantic notion of living single all your life, from having experienced one disappointment; a notion, to say nothing of the false and selfish principles upon which it is grounded, that is usually attended by a much severer sense of disappointment than any occasioned by the events that gave birth to it."

"I hope I am; I have always disdained such a notion."

"Have you one objection that you would wish to act from, to an union with Sir William?"—"No."

"Then, my dear Ellen!" said Mr. Thornton, embracing her, "the question

is decided. And if Sir William is the man you and Mr. Mordaunt describe him to be, your happiness is also decided ; no retrospect will ever disturb it."

" I am willing to think so, but I mistrust myself; the emotion I have but now betrayed——"

" If I saw you insensible, I should be less sure of your happiness ; but the same sentiments that formed your first attachment, will form your second : it is upon Sir William's merits, and your power of appreciating those merits, that I ground my assurance of your happiness : your affection for him will fill the present void in your heart, will give a motive for action, and an interest to duty. If you have thought it possible for those who have lost you to be happy in a second choice, you will not be able to suppose you cannot be so, without making yourself too much, or too little of a compliment."

Ellen

Ellen had nothing to reply to this ; but turning to Mrs. Thornton said, " And you, my dear mother, do you ratify this sentence ?"

" Indeed I do ; it is the dictate of good sense and good principles ; high treason I allow against the laws of romance ; but when did you ever refer your actions to that fantastical code ?"

" Never, thanks to you, my best friend ; and now I think I may engage I never shall."

" I long to know Sir William," said Mrs. Thornton.

" He will meet with your approbation I have no doubt."

" Then must he have more than common merit, less will not satisfy me, when I am looking for a husband for you."

Ellen faintly smiled, and asking Mary, whose silence had marked her dissatisfaction, to accompany her home, said she had promised, on parting with her father, to see him again in two hours.

“Heaven bless you, my dear child !” said Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, both in a breath ; and Mr. Thornton added, “if moderation and rationality were to be personified, they would take no other form than Ellen’s.”

Ellen’s heart was full ; she pressed his hands between her’s, and scarcely uttering ‘adieu,’ walked along with Mary.

Mary had much in her mind ; but of all that was there she was not able to utter a syllable. Ellen talked of the softness of the evening, the fragrance of the woodbines, and the melody of the birds : Mary could neither smell nor hear. Ellen changed the subject, and inquired concerning the last new book she had read, and whether the

colours in her flower-piece stood. Mary could bear no more. "Oh, Ellen!" cried she, throwing her arms around her, "I could not do as you do."

"You could if you would. What your father said was unanswerable; my judgment is thoroughly with him."

"And is it a matter of judgment?"

"Assuredly. What but our judgment shall correct the mistakes of our hearts?"

"I can easily excuse my judgment that office; I hope it will never be called to it."

"You will be the happier. But, educated as you and I have been, in the same school, in the same circumstances, I have no doubt, but our conduct would be the same."

"It is easier to admire than to imitate you. All Aristotle's pupils were not Alexanders."

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt, in whose breast Ellen's agitation had raised the most painful apprehensions, had counted every moment since she quitted him, with the most anxious impatience, and no longer able to wait quietly her return, he had bent his steps towards the parsonage; he met Ellen and Mary. From the first glance of Ellen's eye, he learned all he wished to know. "A blessing will follow all you do, my dear Ellen," said he, "for all you do is founded upon good sense and propriety."

"If I am right in your eyes, and not self-condemned, I know not that there is any thing more in this world to be wished for," said Ellen.

"You have, indeed, laid the best foundation for happiness, and I entertain not a doubt but the superstructure will be all that our most anxious love can desire."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

“ Wisdom is his, and his alone, who knows
“ His heart’s uneasy discord to compose ;
“ In gen’rous love of others good to find,
“ The sweetest pleasures of the social mind ;
“ To bound his wishes to their proper sphere,
“ To nourish pleasing hope, and conquer anxious fear.”

LYTTLETON.

SIR William received Mr. Mordaunt’s summons to Groby Manor with a mixture of the most lively pleasure, and the most tormenting solicitude : he could not doubt of Ellen’s determination in his favor, but he doubted the motives that had produced it. He had begun his attentions to her by a scrupulous weighing of her merits and blemishes, and he had ended with the most

most decided and ardent passion. To be happy, he must be beloved, be beloved preferably, and almost exclusively. To be less than all to Ellen, was, in Sir William's mind, to be little more than nothing. His vanity could scarcely hope, or his reason desire this ; and yet less than this would by him, before marriage, be lamented as a misfortune, and after marriage, be punished as a fault.

He hastened down into Northumberland, oppressed by doubt, yet too much in love to be disposed to be governed even by a confirmation of his doubts.

The sight of Ellen increased his love and his fears ; he found her gentle, complacent, yielding, but to all the symptoms of passion with which he was infected, he found nothing correspondent in Ellen : from the even tenor of her spirits, and the perfect freedom in which he was convinced her choice had been left by her father, he could not suspect that she was influenced in her
acceptance

acceptance of him by any motives but such as she avowed; a sense of his merits, and a conviction that her life would pass happily with him; but these sentiments were far short of those he wished to inspire. He had been told she had loved Henry; she could therefore love. The animation of character which she displayed in all she did, put the matter out of doubt. Her warmth of friendship for Mary, her attachment to her father, were farther proofs, if any had been wanting. Sir William already began to think it an injury to him, that with the ardent feelings she possessed she seemed to grant him only esteem.

To the querulous reproaches that sometimes escaped him, Ellen opposed at times a good-humoured raillery, and at others, with a frank honesty, would refer him to time and his own virtues, as the only grounds on which he could build the probable success of his desires.

“ And

“ And have you no notion of any love but what is grounded on the merits of the object ?” Sir William would ask.

“ Certainly not.”

“ And do you never love but in exact proportion to those merits ?”

“ I don’t say so,” said Ellen, with a blush.

“ And yet you refer me to my merits ?”

“ As the ground work ; that once laid, let me alone for the superstructure.”

“ Is it not laid ?” asked Sir William, peevishly.

“ Without doubt ; but hurrying me will retard, and not forward the building.”

“ Are you always so tardy in works of love ?”

“ All

"All my loves," said Ellen, with emotion, "have hitherto

"Grown with my growth, and strengthened with my
"strength."

I am slow of capacity, and cannot seize an idea the moment it is offered me. You must not expect to reap before you have sown; but wait the season, and be assured you shall have a full harvest."

So Ellen felt, and so Ellen believed; she saw much in Sir William to esteem, and much to like; every day he grew more interesting to her; the happiness she already began to feel she imputed to him; she did not trouble herself to analyze it too scrupulously, nor to examine how much ought to be referred to the unbounded content that shone in her father's countenance, how much to the new-born kindness of her mother, how much to the satisfaction of her sisters, who saw in her marriage the probable sphere of their pleasures much enlarged. If she adverted to any circumstance as making

making a part of her happiness, independent of Sir William, it was a self-gratulation on acting right, and a conviction that she should not by her new connexions grieve Henry. She understood, as a certainty, that in a few months he was to return and marry Lady Almeria. This circumstance had not, it is true, made any part of her motive for her present conduct; but it was impossible not to consider it as an addition to the personal happiness she promised herself. The fear that in yielding so implicitly to his father's will, he had been too careless of that felicity which only can be secured by the wise choice of a partner for life, would sometimes obtrude itself, but she drove it from her.

It is presumptuous in me (thought she) to decide a question of which I know so little. Lady Almeria may have all the virtues and perfections that I wish her to have: I hardly know her; shall I, by judging her harshly, make myself unhappy?

There

There were other uncertain thoughts and vague suspicions, which she found herself, when they occurred, less able to banish from her mind, and which touched her own interests nearer.

These were some doubts of the goodness of Sir William's temper, and the liberality of his mind; she scarcely knew from what such suspicions arose; perhaps from a word or look to a servant, an opinion carelessly dropped in common conversation, an over solicitude for trifles, a something of coming short, as it were, of the thing she wished, rather than any thing directly inimical to it. She had to oppose to these suspicions the generosity and handsomeness with which she knew he had dealt in all matters of settlement, and in all transactions with her father, the unvaried good-humour and sweetness of temper which he displayed towards her, with the exception of what might be called the complainings of too ardent a love, an exception which, however she might

might lament, she hardly knew how to charge upon him as a fault.

To these were added, the gaiety and pleasantness of his conversation, and his desire of accommodation in all matters in which she was concerned. Sometimes she thought this a little studied, but she checked herself in what she thought might be too great a fastidiousness, and sometimes she feared, that whatever idea arose in her mind to the disadvantage of Sir William, might be wholly owing to a comparison, which, do what she would, would sometimes force itself upon her. When this thought occurred she condemned herself as unjust, and almost criminal, and Sir William was dearer to her from the sense of the injury she thought that she had done him.

In a word, he had made that progress in her heart, and she had so accustomed herself to consider him as the person who was henceforth to be her best friend, that it depended wholly

wholly upon Sir William's self to secure her love and her happiness for life.

It is not to be doubted that Lord Villars received the accounts of Ellen's intended marriage with the most heart-felt satisfaction ; but it was a satisfaction that he judged it expedient at present to conceal carefully from his son ; he imagined that he could never plead such an example of submission so irresistibly as in the moment when the final and certain overthrow of all his hopes should fill the breast of Henry with grief, disappointment, and probably resentment.

Lord Villars entreated his sister to keep Ellen as happy and pleased with herself as possible ; and by the most marked change in her conduct towards her, and the most unbounded approbation of her present designs, to make her, if possible, forget the disappointment of her love in the gratification of her vanity. Hence the change

of Mrs. Mordaunt's behaviour to her daughter, in which the good heart of Ellen so sincerely rejoiced.

Lord Villars wrote to Mr. Mordaunt, beseeching him to renew their intercourse and friendship ; and Mr. Mordaunt, whose nature knew not implacability, accepted the olive branch. Lord Villars ventured one step further, and sent to Ellen, as a bridal present, a costly ornament of pearls.

Ellen felt this as an insult, as though her desertion of Henry were to be paid with a pearl necklace. From the man who had so unrelentingly refused her happiness, she could not accept of ornament, and she returned, but with very civil expressions, the expensive trinket.

Sir William was acquainted with this circumstance, and Ellen saw, with a very sensible pain, that it displeased him. He was more willing that she should sacrifice

the dignity of her mind, than that she should betray any remaining resentment to the person who had separated her from Henry.

But the thing was done, and could not be recalled. She endeavoured, however, to convince Sir William that what she had done was not from a feeling of resentment, but from that delicacy which forbids the receiving obligation of any kind, and especially of a pecuniary sort, from those of whom we think ill. And she added, with a softness which ought to have subdued displeasure, even justly founded, that she would have sacrificed even this delicacy, rather than have done what was unpleasing to him.

 CHAP. XVIII.

“ Vola tanto col disio che lento
 ——— “ Gli parrebbe il vento.”

ARIOSTO,

WHILE these things were transacting in Northumberland, Henry was amusing himself extremely well in Italy, perfectly unconscious of the blow that awaited him. He had been acquainted with Ellen's journey to Bath, and had suffered the most cruel uneasiness as to the probable consequence of that expedition; but his heart had recovered its composure, and resumed its hopes, when he knew that she was returned disengaged into Northumberland. Although separated by seas and mountains,

the same satisfaction had filled the hearts of Henry and Ellen, on her being again sheltered, as they had both hoped, by the shades of Groby Manor, from the dangers of solicitation, and screened from the possibility of notice.

This shelter had proved vain, and Henry now learned, although indistinctly, and from doubtful authority, of Ellen's intended marriage with Sir William Ackland. On the thought of the distance that divided Italy from England an icy coldness ran through his veins; there was no staying there, in all the horror of uncertainty, to be made perhaps still more wretched by being put out of doubt.

He quitted Venice on the instant, and with a rapidity far short of his desires, but almost beyond his powers, he arrived in England. Here he loitered not for information, but more and more alarmed by that which reached him as he travelled on, with

the same breathless haste he urged his way into Northumberland.

Here, at the parsonage, on the close of a fine day in September, the moon giving a more affecting tint to objects, the sight of which, from the variety of emotions that they raised, almost shook his frame to dissolution, arrived the wretched Henry.

He asked, in a voice scarcely articulate, for Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, and was told they were at Groby Manor. His informer was a female, and she added, "for Miss Ellen is to be married to-morrow, and my mistress is gone to take leave of her."

Henry felt the adder's fang in his heart, and casting up a look of despair that rather seemed to menace than to supplicate, he rushed forward, and unknowing what he did, or what he meant to do, soon reached the wood that adjoined to Groby Manor.

Amongst

Amongst the few pensioners to whom Ellen's limited means enabled her to extend her benevolence, was a poor woman, who to the burthen of fourscore years added infirmity and misfortune. To her necessities Ellen had often sacrificed the variety of her dress, and the power of purchasing new books, or new music, and it was to Ellen not amongst the least pleasing circumstances of her approaching marriage, that it would enable her to secure poor Deborah from all the distresses of penury for the remainder of her life. Nothing, however, seemed sufficient to console the old woman for the approaching loss of the daily visits of her beloved benefactress ; and Ellen made it a point not to remit her attentions while it was in her power to continue them.

The hurry of the preceding day had prevented her usual visit to Deborah ; but as the cottage did not stand more than five hundred yards from Groby Manor, just on

the outside of the wood, she had withdrawn from her friends, while they were assembled at tea, to give one quarter of an hour to Deborah, to bid her adieu, and bestow her parting bounty, for Ellen was to depart on the morrow.

She was returning from this humane visitation, softened by the gratitude and the blessings of the poor creature she had left, her mind full of past scenes and future expectations, when on a sudden Henry's figure stood before her.

Ellen neither shrieked nor fainted, but she doubted not but that which she saw was supernatural, till Henry, who on the sight of her felt every tumultuous passion dissolve into the most melting tenderness, rushed forward, and clasped her in his arms.

“Am I to believe my senses; are you indeed Henry?”

“Yes,

" Yes, yes, I am Henry, the forgotten Henry ; I know I come unlooked for, undesired ; but I come to claim my own, to save you from the sin of inconstancy."

" Inconstancy ! Do you charge me with inconstancy ?"

" Yes, thou dear false one, yes. Can you deny the charge ?"

" Most confidently. But, dear Henry, compose yourself. What means this sudden appearance ? What mean those looks so eager and so wild ?"

" Are you not married ?"

" No."

" Are you not betrothed ?"

" I beseech you be calm : I will hear all you have to say ; I will satisfy you fully ; but
do

do not terrify me thus ; you will drive my reason from her seat."

" Do I terrify you ? Forgive me, dearest, best beloved of creatures, forgive me. You talk of reason ; mine indeed is gone, is lost. Put your hand here, here—feel here ; do you not feel the burning chain with which my brain is bound ?"

" We will sit down here ; we will converse together : you cannot feel pain any where, Henry, that I shall not commiserate."

" How soft is your voice ! how kind your accents ! Oh, Ellen ! you should not thus have undone me."

A passion of tears stopped his speech ; he wept, concealing his face in Ellen's garment. She hung over him in unutterable distress, and sought to sooth him by the kindest words of the most heart-felt compassion.

At

At length he became more calm, and starting up, "I meant not," said he, "to play the madman and the fool; but let us reason the matter together: I will walk from you for a few moments, and having recovered my understanding will try to keep it."

This was a seasonable relief to Ellen, and gave her time to rally all her faculties; for the sight of Henry, and Henry in such distress, had deprived her of every power of recollection, and made her sensible only to the extremest misery.

"I think I shall not again terrify you," said Henry, returning to her; "I think I can be master of myself. But, Ellen, I come to call you to a severe account, I come to reckon with you for my ruin."

"How innocent I am of your ruin in act or wish, I will not tell you, Henry, for you *know*. I will not tell you to turn your
mind

mind to past transactions: my exculpation I am sure is written in your heart, and cannot be forgotten."

"Is it your exculpation, that you have sacrificed the truest love to a vain ambition? Is it your exculpation, that from disinterestedness, pure as what angels feel, you are become sordid, mercenary?"

"Cruel Henry!—No, my dear cousin, you are not cruel; you are not even mistaken; you know I am not mercenary; you know I am not sordid; you know me thoroughly, and can be at no loss for the real motives of my conduct."

"I know you thoroughly!—No, no.—Once indeed——"

"No retrospect:—It is not only upon the present occasion I have promised to forbear it, and to give way to it is not only useless but detrimental."

"Cool,

“Cool, reasonable Ellen!—But it is false, dissembled; you shall not persuade me that you forget.”

“I forget nothing; I should be sorry to lay the foundation of my duty in the loss of my faculties.”

“And do you indeed remember? Dearest creature, do you remember? It was in this walk, it was under these trees——”

“Forbear. It was indeed in this spot I first acknowledged the preference I entertained for you; a preference justified by a father’s approbation: but here, also, I learned that your father forbade an union that it would be impious in you to form under his prohibition; and here too I solemnly engaged I would never be accessory to your disobedience and your ruin. Which of these recollections can criminate me in your eye, or justify your present extravagance?”

“All,

“ All, all may justify my extravagance : That heart, with all its virtues, has been mine. It is torn from me—most unjustly torn from me—I have lost it for ever—Oh ! Ellen, you bind me to the rack and forbid me to complain !”

“ Such complaint might have been pardonable twelve months ago. No future event can place a more insurmountable bar between us than was my promise then given to your father : in that promise you then acquiesced, why now——”

“ Are you not about to be married to another ? Am I not to be for ever undone ?”

“ When I promised your father never more to listen to you without his approbation, I knew I for ever renounced you ; to-morrow’s intended ceremony will not make the renunciation more absolute, than it then

was.

was. The duty of that moment was yielding ;
the duty of this is perseverance."

" And you, Madam, I find, are equal to
both."

" You will not always, I hope, think that
an ironical praise, and I shall be happy to
prove myself worthy of it."

They now walked on in silence, when
coming to a walk that led immediately to
the house, Ellen turned into it, when hastily
seizing her gown, " you are not going?"
exclaimed he.

" I am going no where," said she mildly,
but where, if you please, you may accom-
pany me."

" Accompany you!—No, Ellen, I must
never accompany you; but may the God
of all good accompany you; may he guard
your sleeping, and bless your waking hours,
and

and may you never more think of such a wretch as I am."

And then quitting his hold, he rushed into the furrounding coppice, and was out of sight in a moment. Perhaps had he waited another instant he had seen those signs of weakness in Ellen which he seemed to have taken such pains to excite.

She was stunned with his vehemence, and overcome by her own recollections, her limbs suddenly failed her, and she sunk at the foot of a tree, nearly senseless, and wholly unable, for some minutes, either to act or think.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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